

ZILLAH;

A TALE OF

THE HOLY CITY

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“BRAMBLETYE HOUSE,” “THE TOR HILL,”

“REUBEN APSLEY,” &c.

“From thee and thy innocent beauty first came
The revealings that taught him true love to adore,
To feel the bright presence, and turn him with shame
From the idols he darkly had knelt to before.”

T. MOORE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1828.

Z I L L A H.

CHAPTER I.

THE storm having exhausted itself in the night, and the wind veering round to the westward, the pirates were busy at an early hour of the following morning in preparing for sea, and every arrangement being completed before noon, the Hebrews were marched down to the head of the creek, and embarked on board the galley, when the pious Salvius, officiating as the chief priest of the robbers, put up public prayers for the success of their voyage, and

made a libation to the wooden Mercury enshrined in his vessel. She was then unmoored, the rowers plied their oars, and the passengers found themselves swiftly coasting the island in a southerly direction. They looked in vain for the ship which they had seen, the day before, in such imminent peril of dashing upon the rocks; she was no longer visible, having probably rode out the storm in safety, (for there were no traces of any calamity in the bay,) and pushed out to sea with the first change of the wind. Zillah strictly scrutinized the neighbouring shores in the expectation that she might still catch a glimpse of Esau; and many a sorry market-steed, dimly seen in the distance, or partially revealed amid the trees and bushes, was at first mistaken for the incomparable black Arabian; but the delusion was soon dispelled; neither the gallant horse nor his adventurous rider were any where to be discerned, and as the latter, who seemed to possess the power of

discovering and following her at will, would hardly suffer her to quit the island without some sort of parley, she was at times inclined to think that he must have perished in the waves.

While she was absorbed in these meditations, they reached the merchantman in which they had sailed from the Tiber, lying at anchor in the sheltered inlet formed by two rocky projections, where she had been securely harboured from the tempest. They saw no more of the Captain or the original crew, nor did they ever learn what became of them. When they went on board, they found their place supplied by some of the pirates; the anchor was weighed, they stood out to sea without let or hindrance, and Gabriel, who was much more conversant with maritime affairs than his companions, could not conceal his amazement, that such an audacious act of piracy could be committed in open day, and in the immediate vicinity of several

populous sea-ports, without interference, and, apparently, without observation.

Salvius had more than once enquired of his prisoners, whether the sum they had named for the ransom of their whole party was the utmost they could raise ; a question which Gabriel had as often answered in the affirmative, adding, that even this must be made contingent upon their being landed in Palestine, while he repeatedly and earnestly demanded at what port they were to be put ashore. Upon this point the pirate either gave evasive answers, or preserved an impenetrable silence, leaving them to form their own conjectures, which were not always of the most consolatory nature. They could assign no motive, however, for his declining the ransom money, especially when they recollected his avaricious character ; nor did his mode of treating them justify any misgivings, for it was much better than they had anticipated, while his demeanour towards Zillah was

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even marked by a particular attention and respect: a circumstance which she herself, unable to account for it in any other mode, would sometimes feel half-inclined to attribute to some mysterious influence of the talismanic necklace, although in the very next moment she would smile at her own credulous reveries.

Their voyage, which was accompanied by gentle and propitious breezes, was unmarked by any variety of occurrence. Salvius, who acted both as pilot and captain, preserving always the same taciturn phlegmatic character, was generally employed in looking over inventories, or making calculations and entries; but his keen, deep-sunk, sordid-looking eyes were never so absorbed in reckoning up future profits, as to be inattentive to present security. Sweeping the ocean at a single glance, he seemed to make up his mind quietly, quickly, definitively, as to the quality of the vessels in

sight, and the course and bearing that he himself should adopt in meeting or avoiding them. Until he had disposed of his valuable prize-ship, he dreamed not of aggression ; his sole object now was to avoid pursuit, attack, or even enquiry from others. Watchful as a tiger, and wary as a fox, even when he appeared most indifferent to what was passing around him, he omitted no manœuvre that might enable him to pursue his voyage without exciting suspicion. Like the snow-crowned volcano they had lately quitted, there was fire enough, however, beneath his frigid and almost torpid exterior ; for when a vessel of force approached him with apparently hostile intentions, his fury exploded all at once, his little eyes glared like those of a hyæna about to be robbed of its prey, his veins swelled and reddened, his sword flew from its scabbard, his voice was heard in all parts of the ship, and he rushed from stem to stern with the energetic impetuosity of rage inflamed

by avarice. These proved to be all false alarms ; they pursued their voyage unquestioned : the African shore was generally in sight, though they never approached very near to it ; the vessel appeared to be steadily following her course for Palestine ; and when, by the time that had elapsed, Gabriel guessed that they must be approximating its shores, he became more importunate with the pirate to learn the port at which they were to be landed. “ Time will show,” was the only answer he could ever extort ; nor were any of the crew, who evinced in all cases a perfect allegiance to their commander, disposed to be more communicative. Perhaps they were themselves ignorant of their destination, at all events none were disposed to divulge it ; and the prisoners were thus kept in a state of suspense, of which the painfulness rather increased than diminished as they approached the termination of their voyage. Salvius regularly read prayers to his crew,

both morning and evening, besides making occasional libations to his patron Deity; and as these acts of piety, however false might be the religion, and however lawless the life of the votary, implied some sort of conscience, the Hebrews could hardly imagine that he would deceive, or treat them with any unnecessary cruelty.

Upon this point their doubts were soon destined to be removed. On coming upon deck one morning, they found themselves within sight of an extensive and apparently magnificent city, which, however, by the style of its buildings, and the number of its gigantic temples, was manifestly no city of Palestine. It formed an extensive semicircle, stretching inland so as to embrace its capacious ports, in front of which two promontories, covered with superb buildings and massive forts, ran far out into the sea, the extremity of one of them being crowned by a circular tower of pro-

digious height, surrounded by galleries, and diminishing in size at each successive stage. No sooner had Gabriel's eye fallen upon this object, than he exclaimed at once, "It is the Pharos of Alexandria!"

The pirate nodded assent, pointed to the signal flying for a pilot, as if to intimate his intention of entering the port, and enquired whether they could raise the ransom-money at this place, since he had no intention of proceeding any farther.

"I have little doubt of it," replied Gabriel: "numbers of my countrymen are settled here, and if the merchant by whom I was once so heavy a loser, be still a resident in the city, I am certain that he will enable me to satisfy your demand."

"It is well," answered Sàlvius, and the dialogue ceased, for he was chary of his words.

Conversing together in Hebrew, the prisoners congratulated one another on the approaching

termination of their captivity, feeling quite sure that the mention of the Sagan's name to any of the wealthy Jewish merchants established at Alexandria, would suffice to procure the amount of their ransom-money ; while Gabriel observed, that they might now reach Jerusalem with greater ease and rapidity than if they had landed at Tyre, the original destination of their vessel. Exhilarated by these anticipations, they saw the pilot come on board with the pleasant impression that he was to be the means of quickly liberating them from their floating prison, and gazed around them with delight and wonder, as he steered the vessel through the rocky, intricate navigation that formed the entrance to the stately harbour, within which they saw several magnificent galleys and pleasure-vessels covered with ivory and gold, upon whose painted sails the wind seemed voluptuously to recline, while their streamers, pennons, and bannerols flashed and wantoned in the

sun. On their right hand they beheld the quarter of the palaces, adorned with the most sumptuous structures devoted to the purposes of luxury, interspersed with temples and sacred groves, and defended by the lofty citadel. Passing these glorious edifices, they entered a wide and deep canal, communicating with the interior harbour, where every thing exhibited the bustle and great traffic to be expected in a city, which, exclusively of its possessing at that time three hundred thousand free inhabitants, was the chief emporium of commerce between Asia and Europe.

Upon the vessel being moored to the quay, the Sagan enquired of the pirate, whether he and his kinsman might not go ashore to confer with some of their countrymen, whom they expected to advance, or become security for their ransom-money. "And who is to be security for your return?" enquired Salvius, in a tone of quiet sarcasm. Having made the proposition

in the singleness of his own honourable and unsuspecting heart, the Sagan was not prepared for the question; but he had no sooner given it a moment's consideration, than he replied, "Do I not leave with you a pledge that is ten times dearer to me than liberty or life itself, when I suffer my beloved child to remain in your hands?"

"That is true," replied Salvius, who had overlooked the fact, from his excessive craftiness and suspicion, as completely as the Sagan had at first from the innate honesty of his character; "You and your friend may debark to-morrow for this purpose; but for the remainder of to-day you must all remain prisoners in the cabin." To this they were forthwith confined, and saw no more of the pirate till the following morning, when the Sagan, with Gabriel and Simon, had permission to go ashore, under escort, however, of the same number of the crew,

accompanied by Salvius himself, who declared that, in spite of the security they had left in his hands, he liked not to trust them among their countrymen in Alexandria without a strong guard. In about an hour the Captain returned on board, attended by an ancient Hebrew, who after having eyed Zillah with a most piercing scrutiny, and whispered a few words apart to the pirate, addressed her in her own language, informing her that he was one of those who had assisted her friends to raise the ransom-money, and that he came to escort her to his own house, where they were assembled to sign certain writings in acknowledgment of the debt they had contracted. “Your clothes and luggage are not included in this bargain,” said Salvius; “but as I wish to deal handsomely with you, I allow you to array yourself in your richest garments, since your father requested that I would do so, and I will even restore to you

the baubles which were taken from your person in Sicily." So saying, he drew out his pouch, and it was not without emotion, that Zillah saw him hang round her neck the talisman, to which she had attached so many mysterious associations, while he clasped upon her wrists the rich Antioch bracelets with which she had been presented at Rome. Eager to comply with her father's request, and desirous to do all possible honour to so joyous an occasion, she arrayed herself in the handsomest habiliments that her wardrobe could supply, threw a long veil over her head and shoulders, stepped ashore with a grateful, buoyant heart, and willingly taking the arm of her ancient fellow-countryman, the very sound of whose voice, speaking her native tongue, inspired her with confidence, she walked briskly forward, Salvius keeping close to her on the other side.

The city of Alexandria was divided from

north to south by a wide and magnificent street, flanked with colonnades, extending from the sea to the Lake Marcotis, and terminated at its respective extremities by the Gates of the Sun and Moon, constructed with all the massive grandeur of the Egyptian style. This great thoroughfare was crossed by another of the same splendid description, the point of intersection forming a large square, from whose centre ascended a lofty obelisk, covered with hieroglyphics. These were the principal resorts of the mingled population, presenting in their different groups, as Zillah passed along, a lively picture, not only of the various nations who frequented this universal mart of pleasure and commerce, but affording a good insight into the prevailing modes and character of the inhabitants themselves at this particular period. To avoid the Etesian winds, now beginning to blow sharply from the north, the philosophers, of whom there had always been

a considerable rendezvous at Alexandria, and who were easily known by their gowns and beards, their staves and pouches, were collected here and there in the sunny and sheltered places, solving problems, working mathematical diagrams, or attempting to puzzle one another with all the puerile and perplexing subtleties of logic. The swarthy Egyptian, with his naked arms and legs, and his trim, wedge-shaped beard, walked with a crest-fallen and dejected air through his own magnificent city, now become the head-quarters of the Roman conqueror. Condemned then, as now, to the miserable lot of slavery, the woolly-headed negro trudged along with his load, singing his native songs, as if determined to show that his mind was free, although his body was in bondage. Indolent Asiatics were reclining in the sun, its warmth being rendered acceptable by the late season of the year ; while the long-bearded Jews, the principal commercial agents of the city, were bustling to and fro,

indifferent to the idlers who surrounded them, and absorbed apparently in their own immediate concerns. Here, was seen a beautiful and elegantly-clad Greek, endeavouring to forget his national and individual degradation in a general superciliousness and sensuality ;—there, the stern, iron-visaged Roman veteran, as if conscious that he was one of the masters of the world, stalked with the air of a conqueror up the steps leading to the stately Temples of Isis or Serapis, and gazed upon the assembled priests within, or upon the passing stream of tributary people in the street below, with a silent haughty smile.

Almost every country seemed to have furnished its animal as well as its human representative, to throng the streets of this universal emporium. Asses, mules, and horses, were intermingled with buffaloes, camels, dromedaries, and elephants, their various noises forming a dissonant, though not inappropriate accompani-

ment to the Babel dialects of their drivers, or of the many-nationed bands collected around them. Nor were the different pursuits of these motley throngs more dissimilar than their individual origin and exterior. It was impossible to say whether luxury or commerce, war or peace, indolence or industry, formed the predominant characteristic of the place. Caravans arriving from the East, and still covered with the dust of the Desert, had no sooner ceased filing along, than their place was supplied by tumblers, mountebanks and buffoons, dancers and jugglers, actors and actresses, minstrels and musicians, filling the air with joyous songs and the twang of instruments, while sounds of kindred revelry echoed from many a neighbouring mansion : and anon was heard the approach of some auxiliary detachment, summoned from the near provinces of Asia or Africa ; effeminate Syrians in gorgeous array, marching to the soft notes of flutes and cornets ; wild Arabs, blowing their

shrill horns, and shrouded in the dust spurned up by the hoofs of their fiery horses ; dark Libyans, tramping tumultuously forward in barbaric pomp, while they made the air resound with tambourines, bells, and cymbals ; or a cohort of Roman regulars, marching to the sound of their own steady footsteps, a silent, stern phalanx of moving iron, over the centre of which a golden eagle was seen to hover.

Such were the groups and scenes through which Zillah had to pass, not without wonder at their variety, as well as at the great length of the street. At last they reached its extremity, when, to her increased amazement, her companions stopped at the battlemented gateway of the citadel, opening into an extensive place of arms, in which troops were exercising. “ Why do we enter this fortress ? ” she exclaimed ; “ my father cannot be here, nor is this the dwelling of which you spoke.”

“ Time will show,” said the pirate, taking

the arm which the Hebrew had relinquished, while the latter stepped forward to a small wicket, where Zillah heard him say to some one within, "We have brought the beautiful Hebrew maiden, of whom the merchant Salvius spoke to you yesterday. Where is the purchase-money to be paid?"

Immediately, an old man, in rich robes, with a gold chain around his neck, and a key embroidered upon his shoulder, came forth from a side-door in the gateway, drew off Zillah's veil, surveyed her from head to foot, and exclaimed, "Beautiful indeed! she is a stately creature, and well worth the money. Centurion! bring up a guard of honour, and escort this lady to the gate Anubis, in the palace." The soldiers formed before and behind her, the word was given to march, and Zillah, taken completely by surprise, as well as utterly aghast and bewildered by the alarming nature of the transaction, walked unconsciously forward in

a momentary stupor of amazement.' In a few seconds, however, her faculties regained their power, and with the rapidity of lightning the whole horror of her situation rushed upon her mind. The villanous and sordid pirate, dissatisfied with the sum that had been fixed for their ransom-money, had sold her for a slave; the treacherous old Hebrew was his agent, and she was now in the power of one of those governors of Alexandria, who had latterly rendered themselves almost proverbial for their gross sensuality and profligate libertinism! If any thing could add to this accumulation of wretchedness, it was the possibility that her father and Gabriel might, like herself, have been sold for common slaves: a thought so overwhelmingly painful, that for the moment it even drove from her mind her own terrible doom, and banished all idea of resistance or escape. These, indeed, were manifestly impossible; she was guarded by soldiers, and encircled by the

lofty walls and towers of a strong fortress :—yet why should she submit to her dreadful fate like an unresisting victim ? Her ear caught the tramp of approaching troops—she would scream—she would struggle to get free—she would appeal to them for protection and deliverance—some pitying individual might become her friend—she would at least publish the fraud and outrage, of which she was the victim—it might thus reach the ears of her father—any thing was better than being thus passively sacrificed.

While such wild and desperate thoughts were rushing confusedly athwart her mind, and she was preparing to execute her purpose, she heard some one exclaim by her side, in the loud accents of sudden surprise, “ Ha ! Zillah ! my beloved Zillah ! is it possible ? ” and instantly recognizing the well-known voice, she outstretched her imploring hands towards the

speaker, passionately ejaculating, “Felix ! dearest Felix ! save, oh save and deliver me !”

“Ay, or perish on the spot !” exclaimed Felix, tearing his sword from its scabbard. “Soldiers ! fall back, or, by Mars ! I will cut down whosoever opposes me !” The centurion and his men, however, knew their duty better than to submit to this order, which, indeed, could have only emanated from the momentary phrensy of an agonized lover. The clashing of swords was instantly heard ; a desperate contest ensued. Felix, assailed on all sides, was disarmed, and beaten to the ground ; and at the same moment Zillah, heart-stricken at the sight of his danger, and overcome with contending emotions, uttered a shuddering groan, and sunk fainting into the arms of the soldiers.

On recovering her senses, she found herself lying upon an ottoman, while two female attendants were assiduously applying such restora-

tives as her situation required. At first she was bewildered, imagining herself to be in a dream, especially when she beheld a gigantic black granite figure of some hideous Egyptian divinity planted at each corner of the room ; but her recollection gradually returned, and she waved away her attendants with her hand, exclaiming, “ I am well now ; quite well. Leave me—leave me, I implore you, to my own miserable thoughts.” They obeyed with a respectful salutation ; and as they closed the door, her eye wandered in a vague uncertainty of purpose around her prison, for such she already felt it to be. It was a splendid lofty room, inlaid with marbles and ivory, and adorned with large silver mirrors, as well as with Sphinxes and other Egyptian symbols. Her first definite thought was of escape. She tried the massive door,—it was fastened : she flew to the windows, for she observed them to be unsecured ; they looked out upon the sea, which, at a formidable

depth below, washed the palace walls; and she again threw herself upon the ottoman in a blank desolation of spirit. As the immediate hope of escape vanished, the recent occurrence presented itself more vividly to her memory : her heart throbbed afresh at the generous temerity of Felix ; she again shuddered at the probable consequences of his desperation, although she believed that he had been borne down to the ground by the centurion's shield without being wounded ; and she became suddenly suffused with a burning blush from brow to bosom, as she ejaculated to herself—"Heavens ! did I not call him '*dearest* Felix ?' What must he think of me—what can I think of myself?—before so many witnesses too ! Surely he must know that the word escaped me in my agitation—that it was quite unintentional—that I knew not what I said. And he, too, did he not call me his beloved Zillah ? But he did not—no, no, he could not mean it—he knew not what he

uttered." This was, perhaps, the truth, but it was not the whole truth ; for although neither party might have intended to use these endearing words, both deeply felt the sentiment they conveyed. In short, they had been mutually driven into an unpremeditated declaration of love. Surprise and highly-excited feelings had anticipated the tedious formalities of ordinary courtship ; their hearts had unconsciously overleaped all the timid delays of doubt and bashfulness ; one single moment, one single word, had sufficed to make them avowed lovers. Zillah, blushing still more deeply at the discovery, felt this to be the case as far as she herself was concerned : she could not any longer mistake the secret sensations she had been cherishing in her bosom ; she recognized the source of that unsupportable sympathy which had deprived her of all sensation when she beheld its dear object beaten to the earth ; and judging by her own impressions, she was led to infer that the inner-

most heart of Felix might respond to the memorable word that had escaped his lips. His actions proved it. Whence could have arisen his enthusiastic, his generous, his reckless valour? what could have prompted him to so desperate an attempt as that of rescuing her by main force, except the blinding fervour of an irrepressible passion? Even in the midst of her confusion and blushes, there was something so soothing, so delightful in these reveries, that she continued to indulge them, unconscious of the lapse of time, and almost forgetting the terrible predicament in which she was placed, when she heard the door thrown open, and, to her amazement and dismay, Mark Antony entered the apartment. He started back at sight of her with scarcely less surprise than when he had so unexpectedly encountered her in the Astrologer's chamber at Rome, appearing almost to doubt the evidence of his own senses. "What! my Venus Callipyges!" he at length

exclaimed, “ have you a second time, and in a different quarter of the world, thus betaken yourself to my dwelling? If this be the result of chance, it must prove to you that the fates, and an uncontrollable destiny, have decreed you to be mine; but I will rather believe it to be the dictate of discretion, and the result of your own free choice; the more especially when I see upon your wrists the twining serpents, whose symbol I understand, and which I well remember to have clasped around your beautiful arm. I accept their happy omen; but why did you thus introduce yourself as a slave? You might have come openly to claim the performance of my promise; you shall still be Priestess of the Sun, and the relative on whom I had conferred that appointment—”

“ Audacious Pagan !” interposed Zillah, tearing off the bracelets, and dashing them upon the floor; “ thus do I destroy your omen, and cast from me the hated baubles which false-

hood and treachery had entrapped me to wear, as they have betrayed me into the power of the man upon earth whom I most detest! A faithless pirate, who surprised and captured our vessel, has sold me to you as a slave. You know that I am the daughter of the Sagan of Jerusalem. If I may not demand my freedom as a right, I must even implore you to name my ransom-money; unless, in the recollection that you are a Roman Triumvir, you will acknowledge the plea when I appeal to your generosity and honour, and restore me at once to my friends, who are still in the hands of this fraudulent pirate."

"Passion, I see, still becomes you as well as ever," replied Antony, surveying her with a smile of lascivious triumph. "By Hercules! I like this fiery loveliness, for I am sick of the languishing and voluptuous beauties of the East. But harkye, my ox-eyed Juno! for thou art scornful and majestic as the goddess herself:

—if in Rome, where I courted popularity and golden opinions, I had determined to force thee to my will ; thinkest thou that here, here in my own palace, in my own government, in the midst of my own army, I am likely to spare thee, or suffer thee again to escape ? Go to, proud girl, thou hast forgotten both thyself and Mark Antony !”

“ If human aid be vain, I will humbly call upon the God of Israel, to whom your armies and your citadels are but as chaff, and who, I trust, will not forget his handmaid in the hour of her peril and deep trouble.”

“ Antony is a god in Syria ; and to him had you better appeal, if you hope for favour.”

“ Blaspheme not, Pagan ! Insult the slave whom you have so honourably obtained, as much as the meanness of your soul may dictate, but lift not up your impious voice against her God !”

“ Devoutly spoken, and with an air of most

becoming solemnity ! You Hebrews, I see, are all equally fanatical, and will tolerate no deity but your own. It pleases me the better. I begin to loathe the yielding wantons of Asia, and, like a true soldier, feel that there is little honour to be won where there is no resistance to overcome. If your's be stubborn, the greater will be my glory : you have piqued both Mark Antony and his gods to the contest ; upon your own head be all its consequences ! but, methinks, you might have more safely insulted Diana at Ephesus."

" I meant no insult ; although innocence, chastity, and true religion, may well appear such to you, and to your profligate gods."

" One of these causes of insult you shall not long possess. But, in spite of your scornful bearing, I will deal indulgently with you. You have, as yet, had no time to reflect upon your abject and helpless condition, to weigh the consequences of defying me. For this purpose, I

again grant you three days, as I generously did in Rome. Till then I visit you no more; for it becomes me not to bandy contumelious terms with an inferior; but, at the expiration of that period, you must either yield spontaneously to my wishes, and dictate your own reward, or prepare to be compelled to compliance, and continue still my slave." He was about to quit the apartment, when Zillah exclaimed, in a faltering voice, "Stay! hear me for one moment. For myself I dare not, will not solicit any favour, since it can only be purchased by dishonour. But may I appeal to the justice, to the magnanimity of Mark Antony—to his respect for his own fame—and implore him to interfere, that my dear father and my kinsman be not sold as common slaves by this infamous pirate? Nay, turn not from me. Even upon my knees will I implore you to grant me this only boon."

"They who solicit favours must first show

a disposition to grant them. The fate of your father and kinsman is in your own hands. Let this influence your decision!" With these words he quitted the apartment.—Antony was not very liable to any visitings of compunction; and if he became suddenly anxious to redeem the Sagan and Gabriel, and remove them from Alexandria, it was either for the purpose of silencing any clamour they might raise, or, in the persuasion that Zillah would become more amenable to his wishes when she learned that her relations had returned to Jerusalem, in the despair of discovering what had become of her. He sent, accordingly, for his chamberlain, the old man who had received Zillah in the gateway of the citadel, and who was now the minister of his master's secret pleasures instead of Pyttalus, bidding him find out Salvius, ransom his Hebrew prisoners, and summon Gabriel, but not either of his companions, to the palace. These orders were

promptly obeyed.—“ I have sent for you,” said Antony, addressing Gabriel when he appeared, “ because I wish not to hold parley with your *choleric old kinsman—I forget his title, who is somewhat too passionate for an ambassador. I have ordered you to be ransomed.*”

“ We thank you for your interference, but we were already in treaty with the Alabarch of our countrymen for this purpose.”

“ You absconded from Rome so hastily and covertly,” continued Antony, “ that I had not an opportunity of giving an answer to your embassy. You may receive it now. Tell Antigonus, your usurping King, that I have determined to support his rival Herod, and that I counsel him to surrender the crown of Judæa, ere I dispatch my lieutenant with a Roman force to tear it from his brow.”

“ These will be sore tidings to bear to our royal master. They are such as we had little reason to expect from the tenour of our last

conversation in Rome; and still less after you had condescended to accept the rich and rare jewels with which we were entrusted."

"*What jewels?*" enquired Antony with a look of surprise. Gabriel rehearsed the whole list, giving the history and pedigree of each gem with his usual enthusiasm, and detailing the circumstances under which they had been delivered to Pyttalus. "Beware, Hebrew!" exclaimed Antony; "I am not to be deceived or trifled with. I know nothing of these jewels. Have you any document to support this strange assertion?"

"Yes; one that I have secreted with care, because I felt it to be a voucher which might be essential to our safety on our return to Jerusalem." He tore open the lining of his garment, within which he had sewn the receipt of Pyttalus, and handed it to Antony, who coloured with anger as he read it, and, stamping upon the floor, ordered the attendants who entered to

take charge of Gabriel, and escort him, at the expiration of two hours, to the Centurion's room in the guard-house.

At the time appointed he was accordingly conducted to the place mentioned, where he was presently joined by Antony. "You were right, Hebrew!" said the latter, as he entered; "and if you receive tardy justice, it shall be at least full and satisfactory. The application of torture soon extracted the truth from the prevaricating Greek, and you will see that he is not likely to deceive either of us again." So saying, he opened the canvass of the window, and pointed to a court-yard beneath, where Pyttalus was hanging upon a lofty gallows. "Eli!" ejaculated Gabriel, recoiling from this hideous spectacle, "the wretched man defrauded us, indeed, of a precious treasure, but we sought not that he should undergo the fate of Haman."

"I hung him not for defrauding you, so much as for deceiving me. Besides, I was tired of

the crafty knave, as he had long ceased to amuse, while he continued to plunder me, and I am not therefore sorry to have a fair excuse for getting rid of him. You must have thought me a paltry, prevaricating knave, a retail swindler, a mere Greek ;—it is high time you should learn, that if I rob and plunder, it is always as a monarch, and according to the law that kings have established. There is your box of jewels : some few the knave had sold, but I have replaced them with others of greater value, so that you may face Antigonus without fear or trembling.”

Gabriel clasped the recovered box in a transport of delight, and proceeded greedily to examine and reckon up his darling gems, totally forgetful of the offensive distrust that such a proceeding might imply ; when, being satisfied that all was right, he poured forth his acknowledgments in terms of unbounded gratitude, that might not easily have been exhausted, had

not Antony exclaimed, "Enough! enough! and now that you are provided with an answer to your embassy, that you have recovered your jewels, and that nothing prevents your return to Jerusalem, it is my pleasure that you quit Alexandria within two days."

"Alas! our rarest and most precious treasure—the Sagan's daughter—our dear Zillah—"

"She is safe and well," interposed Antony; "if she oppose not her own elevation, she may attain distinguished dignities, and, perhaps, be not less able to protect her countrymen at Alexandria, than was the beautiful Esther at Babylon."

"Know you, then, what has become of her? Oh leave us not in ignorance! for her doting father is almost heart-broken with her loss, and will never quit the city till he has recovered her."

"He will never recover her; and you have my peremptory orders for leaving Alexandria

within two days at farthest. Yonder dangling Greek may teach you that I am not to be offended with impunity. If you would avoid his fate, obey my commands; and remember that here in the East we are somewhat short and summary in our punishments."

"Nay, but in pity reveal—"

"I have said," interposed Antony, with a stern look; and waving his hand, as if to enjoin silence, he quitted the room.

CHAPTER II.

ZILLAH, in the mean while, a prisoner in her splendid apartment, remained a prey to the most poignant anxiety on her father's account, and to not less fearful apprehensions upon her own. To escape without assistance from a palace enclosed within a garrisoned fortress, was beyond the limits of hope, especially as her insensible state, when she entered it, had precluded her from making any observations that might enable her to find her way out. And to what quarter could she look for assistance? Her father and Gabriel were, in all probability, utterly ignorant of her fate, even if they were not in

some predicament little less forlorn than her own. She thought, for a moment, of Esau. He had intimated an intention of following her, whithersoever her destiny might lead her, and hitherto he had appeared to perform his strange vow; but what availed his ambiguous amity, if such indeed it might be termed? She needed not a clandestine champion to steal upon her sleeping hours, and harass her with obscure forebodings; but one who would come manfully forward to her rescue, or teach her how to avoid the snares with which she was beleaguered around. From her two female attendants, assiduous as they were, and profoundly respectful in their attentions, she could glean little information. They were Egyptians; one of them, however, spoke a broken and imperfect Latin, and from her she learned, that the old astrologer, who had effected her liberation in Rome, was no longer in the service of her master. From that quarter, therefore, no succour

could be expected. She showed the talisman to the women, in the vague expectation that it might exert the same inexplicable influence over them as it had operated upon their fellow-countryman in Rome; but, although they seemed to recognize the hieroglyphics and mystic figures engraven upon the half-moon with a feeling of devout deference, they took no farther notice; the amulet had lost its charm, and she returned it to her bosom, not without a slight blush at her own superstitious credulity. Still there was one, though last, not least in her fond hopes, whose valour, whose virtues, whose generous and heroic devotement to her cause, had not left her without a fitting champion. Felix, her *dearest* Felix, (for her heart began now to recognize the epithet,) he who had apostrophized her as his beloved Zillah, would not abandon her to be sacrificed and dishonoured. The passionate though rash affection which, at the sight of her captivity, had made his sword

fly from its scabbard, and assault a whole detachment of soldiers, would prompt him to some gallant and daring enterprise that should deliver her from the hand of the oppressor, even out of the camp of the mighty among the captains. Alas! this fond hope, to which she clung with the whole yearning of her heart, proved as baseless and flitting as it was delightful. On interrogating her attendant, she learned that Felix was in close durance, and in peril of some heavy, perhaps some fatal sentence, for having drawn his sword upon the guard within the sacred precincts of the palace; and the sole satisfactory information she could obtain, was the assurance that he had received only one trifling wound in his encounter with the Centurion and the soldiers. In spite of this consolation, the statement altogether was disheartening and alarming; and yet, painful as it was, Zillah found a solace in talking about Felix, who, she learned, in answer to her enquiries, had only

lately arrived at Alexandria, with the legion, of which his uncle Sosius, the particular friend of Antony, was general.

Thus, in whatever direction she turned her busy thoughts, human aid seemed utterly hopeless ; and yet, instead of being plunged into despondency, her countenance became animated with a pious confidence, as she exclaimed, “ What avails it that no arm of flesh be stretched forth to succour me ? Is not the God of Israel more mighty than man that he hath made ? He who sent Daniel to rescue Susanna, even when she was being led to execution, will not forget an innocent daughter of Jerusalem, but will deliver my soul out of prison, that it may praise His name for ever. In the Lord will I put my trust.” Sustained and fortified by this religious confidence, Zillah saw the dreary hours of her imprisonment wear away with an anxious and unhappy, but not a prostrate spirit. No incident occurred to elevate

her hopes or deepen her dejection. Her attendants presented themselves and retired at stated hours ; but, having already gathered all the information they were able or willing to afford, she possessed no other means to vary the tedious monotony of her confinement than to sit at the window, and gaze out upon the bustling scene of the port, and its enclosing promontories. She beheld gay vessels and numerous groups of people engaged in all the various occupations of pleasure and commerce, and she strained her eyes in the hope of discovering her father or Gabriel, or some other friend ; but the throngs were all too remote to admit of individual recognition. She watched every evening for the lighting of the great beacon-fire on the top of the Pharos, and saw it blaze up to heaven like a volcano. Both day and night, within the palace and without it, she heard the mingled sounds of revelry and war, the braying trumpets that announced the

review or the arrival of troops, the joyous music of the feast, the merriment of wassailers starting the solemn midnight with hilarious laughter, the minstrel's roundelay, the noisy jollity of dancers, buffoons, and junketers. " But alas !" thought Zillah, " whatever be the pursuits of all these various voluptuaries, no one recks of me. I am a prisoner and alone in the midst of the joyous crowd ; they hurry to the festival, and heed not the groan of the victim."

It was the evening of the second day ; on the following morning she was to expect the terrible visit of Mark Antony ; dark forebodings, like the gloom of a coming tempest, lowered around her ; the courage that had hitherto supported her began to droop and fail, although she knew not why ; and as she mournfully watched the setting sun, her heart seemed gradually to sink down with it. In spite of her efforts to shake off her despondency, it continued to increase, until, with a feeling of calm

desperation, her eye measured the depth from the window to the sea; a dizzy, a fearful descent. “Here, at least,” she whispered to herself, “one mode of escape is left open. If violence be offered to me, I may take refuge in death. Better to die innocent, than live dishonoured and degraded. Saul would not survive his dishonour. Samson destroyed himself rather than become a sport and a scorn to the Philistines; and why should Zillah live to be the Dalilah of a Pagan? Clasp^{ing} her hands together, and fixing her eyes upon the floor, she remained for some time lost in melancholy reveries, when a female voice, soft, low, dulcet as a lover’s lute, and sounding close to her ear, chanted in Hebrew a verse of the thirty-second Psalm: “Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah!”

Starting from her position, she gazed around her with an indescribable wonder, not unmixed

with awe. She was alone in the apartment. The exquisite, and, as it seemed, the more than human melody of the voice, the Hebrew language, the words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, so expressly applicable to her forlorn situation, and to the secret aspirations of her soul, all conspired to impress her with the conviction, that the Lord had sent an angel to comfort and deliver her ; even as, in the olden times, he had miraculously rescued divers of his chosen people in the hour of peril and tribulation. Her heart thrilled with a solemn reverent fear ; she sunk upon her knees, and stealing timid glances around her, expected every moment to encounter some celestial visitant. The voice was mute ; no object met her eyes ; all within the chamber was hushed and motionless :—several minutes elapsed in the bewilderment of a silent and almost breathless suspense. Trembling with amazement, she at length saw one of the large silver mirrors start from its

fastening, and swing round, when, from an opening in the wall behind it, a small female figure stepped into the chamber, enveloped in a shawl, which, covering her head and mouth, and descending to her feet, allowed nothing but her eyes to be seen. In her right hand she held a bag, which she threw upon the floor as she entered. Neither her garb, her deportment, nor the mode of her appearance, intimated her to be an angelic messenger; and Zillah's previous awe was subsiding into simple wonder, and the apprehension of some new treachery, when the stranger exclaimed, in the same surpassingly mellifluous voice she had previously heard, "Be not alarmed, Zillah, I am a friend; but though I speak your language, and am even, as you have heard, not unacquainted with your sacred writings, I will confess to you, that I am no Hebrew. Was it to inspire you with confidence, or to enjoy the spectacle of your alarm and wonderment, that I warbled to you a verse

of your royal Psalmist? I know not. I am an inconsistent and a sportive creature; and yet I have reason enough for wretchedness, and I came hither upon no trifling errand, for it is my purpose to liberate you from captivity; to save you from dishonour; to restore you to your friends." Sinking down upon the ottoman as she spoke, she pointed to it with the condescending air of one who had been accustomed to receive profound homage, but wished to dispense with it upon the present occasion, and to place her colloquist upon a level with herself. "Be seated, maiden," she continued; "this is neither the place nor the season for ceremonious observances; I would wave all the customary honours of my rank; let us converse as equals." Though this was pronounced with a graciousness and suavity, there was something commanding and majestic, even in its very humility—something that indicated a consciousness of exalted station, and implied a lofty if not a

haughty spirit. As she seated herself, the stranger threw off her enveloping shawl, when Zillah was absolutely dazzled, not less by the effulgence of her beauty, than by the magnificence of the jewels with which her whole figure was emblazed. Appearing to be about thirty years of age, she united all the elastic freshness of youth to the rich maturity of riper charms. Even for an Egyptian, she was dark, but still the blood blushed through the exquisitely soft and delicate texture of her skin, while her features were absolutely faultless, and her figure cast in the finest mould of symmetry. But as Zillah proceeded to converse with her, she found that her beauty, perfect as it was, constituted her least attraction; or rather, that her power to vary its expression became more captivating than all her other allurements. As if anxious to display this versatility, even to a female admirer, she wore at times a languishing and voluptuous air, as if she were faint with the

thoughts of love; from which she would suddenly start into the piquant, volatile, and debonair graces of an arch coquette, or assume the dignified and graceful stateliness of a princess. In all these changes, her voice and address were so fraught with fascination; her blandishments were so winning; she was altogether so irresistibly bewitching, that Zillah never afterwards mentioned her by any other name than that of the enchantress.

“ You are handsome, very handsome,” said the stranger, leisurely surveying Zillah, before she proceeded farther to unfold the purport of her visit—“ of a stately and dignified presence, but little adapted, as I should have surmised, to the taste of **Mark Antony**. A thousand times has he sworn to me that he could never love any one taller than myself; but his vulgar, sensual soul is incapable of truth or constancy; and even in my own capital, nay, in my own palace, he dares to forget his allegiance to Cleopatra !”

“ To Cleopatra !” exclaimed Zillah ; “ am I, indeed, conversing with Cleopatra ? Oh, most beautiful and illustrious queen ! I implore you, by the love you bear to Antony——”

“ Love to Antony !” interposed * Cleopatra, her eyes and her diamond tiara flashing together, as she tossed up her head, while the corners of her mouth were drawn down with an expression of fierce ineffable scorn;—“ for her own sake, and for that of her kingdom, the Queen of Egypt may condescend to win the heart of the victorious Roman general, that so she may subdue her conqueror. This is degradation enough for the descendant from a long line of Ptolemies : but learn, maiden, that Cleopatra is not formed to love a coarse, unintellectual, and inelegant soldier.”

“ I believe it, I believe it !—but you cannot abhor, you cannot detest him as I do. You said that you came to save, to rescue me. Tell me, oh, quickly tell me how, and forgive my

impatience, for you cannot judge of my deep misery."

"Whatever it may be, your's will quickly cease; but who shall snatch me from mine? Vain are my incessant dissipations; vain is every external change when the sorrowing heart remains the same. Unless the vacant mind of Antony, adapted for nothing but sensuality, be stimulated by perpetual novelty, it sinks into tædium and melancholy; to prevent which, I am forced to become the laborious slave of his pleasures. Sometimes I am a goddess, a queen, a Bacchante, a huntress; I fish, I chase with him, I accompany him in the camp as well as the court, by day and by night I am doomed to share his mad debaucheries; but the soul of Cleopatra is too refined to wallow in such orgies without being revolted; and under each disguise, in every moment of my life, I feel the deep humiliation of being obliged to court as a conqueror, him whom I hate and despise as a

man. Have I not abundant cause for wretchedness? But you look impatient—your eager eyes are riveted upon the opening in the wall. *It is natural, and I will keep you no longer in suspense. Antony was surprised when he learned that there were subterranean communications from this palace to all the theatres; he has yet to discover, that there is a perfect labyrinth within its walls, which was my motive for assigning it to him as a residence. Follow me!*"

So saying, she again enveloped herself in her shawl, entered the opening behind the mirror, and ascended a narrow, dark staircase, followed by Zillah, until they reached a level, when she stopped, and said to her companion, "Now advance no farther, and beware how you look down, for a moment's dizziness, or a single false step, might dash you to atoms." Zillah, gazing beneath her, beheld a vast and lofty hall, near the ceiling of which she found herself standing. It was spacious as the interior of a temple, de-

corated with ponderous columns, a large statue of the veiled Isis, and other grim, gigantic, and hideous deities of the Egyptian mythology, which being only indistinctly revealed in the dim twilight, imparted an additionally stupendous and terrific character to the gloomy vastness of the enclosure wherein they stood. A wrought stone cornice, projecting about two feet from the wall, extended from the spot where they stood to the opposite extremity of the building. "Have you the courage to risk your life by walking along this dizzy ledge?" enquired Cleopatra, pointing to it. "It is your only means of escape, and I have myself just traversed it for the purpose of visiting you?"

"I can dare any peril, however desperate, that will rescue me from Mark Antony, and restore me to my friends; but how shall I express my gratitude for the heroic generosity that led you to encounter such a risk for the sake of delivering me from my persecutor?"

“There was little danger, for I am accustomed to such freaks, nor was my motive so disinterested as you may imagine. At present, I only wished to show you the hazardous nature of your exploit before you decided upon encountering it; you have consented to put your life in jeopardy, in order to preserve your honour. It is enough. Let us return to your prison.”

“But why not make the experiment now, instantly, this very moment? I am prepared, eager to commit myself to this fearful footing, to any thing that may lead me back to my father, and away from the hateful Antony.”

“This might, indeed, suit your purpose, but it would not answer mine. My orders must be implicitly obeyed. We must return to your apartment.”

Descending the stairs to the chamber which they had previously quitted, Cleopatra threw off her shawl, and again seating herself upon

the ottoman, informed Zillah, that the colossal temple, or saloon, she had just visited, was called the Hall of Isis, in which a grand festival was to be celebrated at midnight, accompanied with sacrifices to the goddess. " All the nobility and the principal priests of Alexandria," continued the queen, " will be assembled at this great ceremony. At the approach of midnight, array yourself in the disguise which is enclosed in yonder bag, ascend the steps behind the mirror, remain concealed where we were both just now stationed, and when you hear the priest of Isis give the health of Antony, and the band strike up his favourite march, issue from your hiding-place, and walk with the stately tread that is natural to you along the cornice, taking especial care to turn your face to the wall, not only to prevent your being recognised, but to avoid a giddiness that might be fatal to you if you looked down ; while you must not omit to wave your left

hand towards the assemblage, as if in aversion and rejection. Do you fully understand these instructions ?”

“ I do : but why must this be done in the face of an assembled multitude, where there is so much risk of discovery, when I might perform it now, without disguise, and without the possibility of detection ?”

“ I am accustomed to implicit obedience, not to interrogatories. Are you willing to commit yourself to my guidance, to attempt your escape precisely in the manner I have dictated ?”

“ Pardon me, and accept my submission. I place in your hands my life, and that which is still dearer to me, my honour. Your injunctions shall in every point be strictly followed.”

“ It is the only condition for which I stipulate ; but this I shall most rigorously exact. Listen, and mark ! At the farther extremity of the cornice, behind the capital of the great column, you will find an aperture in the wall,

leading to a narrow flight of stairs, at the bottom of which a female will be in attendance. Pronounce the word ‘Anubis!’ when she will divest you of your disguise, and conduct you out of the palace and the fortress by the subterranean passage that leads to the theatre.”

“But, my dear father, my kinsman Gabriel, and our brave and trusty attendant Simon, how shall I discover and rejoin them? and what will become of me in this strange city, if I may not claim their protection?”

“Antony, who ransomed them, has ordered them to quit Alexandria, but they have not yet done so. They are at this moment concealed in the house of the Alabarch of the Hebrews, whither you will be conducted to join them, and you will then do well to lose no time in taking your departure for Judæa. Tell me, Zillah, have I omitted any thing that may conduce to your safe and certain escape? Have I left you aught to desire?”

“Oh ! nothing, nothing, most generous and gracious Queen ! unless you can show me how I may testify my gratitude for such an inappreciable service.”

“By an accurate observance of my orders ; I require no other acknowledgment.”

“They shall be most devoutly obeyed. But when Antony discovers my escape :—he is omnipotent throughout Egypt :—shall we not be pursued, overtaken, brought back ?”

“How can he suspect your escape from the locked chamber of a guarded palace, within an impregnable fortress ? Leave the bag that contains your disguise in the passage of the wall, close the spring-mirror behind you, and before you quit the chamber tear one of the window curtains. He will conclude, that in a moment of desperation, from the terror of his approaching visit, you have climbed up to the window, thrown yourself into the sea, and perished, when his callous soul will immediately turn to some

new pleasure, and he will think of you no more. Have you any other objection to make, or request to urge?"

"None—none! And yet there is one—it has occurred to me—I fear you will think me importunate and over-bold," faltered Zillah, hesitating and blushing deeply.

"Speak freely, what can I do more for you?"

"Nothing for myself—you have conferred too much already; but if I may not evince my gratitude to you, I would not willingly appear ungrateful towards another. There is a young Roman here—his name is Felix—my father was acquainted with him in Rome—he met us, as we were crossing the place of arms, and out of his respect for my family, was mad enough to draw his sword upon the guard, in a desperate attempt to rescue me. For this offence he lies under arrest, and threatened with heavy punishment. It would delight me—that is to say, my father would, I am sure, be gratified,

if I could become instrumental in relieving this youth from a disgrace of which I myself was the unhappy cause."

"Nor would Zillah, I suspect, be much less delighted than her father," said Cleopatra, with an arch smile. "Nay, you need not blush so deeply ; your secret is safe, but it was revealed to me before you had half concluded your speech. In these matters I am as profound an adept as Sappho ; and your hesitation, your eyes, your voice, your heaving bosom, your changing complexion, all disclosed to me that you were in love with Felix. You start. Well, then, I will relieve you from your embarrassment, by telling you of another discovery I have made. Felix is in love with you."

"He has never uttered a word to that effect ; or, at least, only *one*," said Zillah, more confused than ever.

"His actions have been eloquent enough without the aid of speech. Who but a lover

would have drawn his sword upon a whole detachment of soldiers ? Who but a lover, when he was committed to prison for the offence, would have forgotten his wound, and his impending punishment, to think solely of his mistress ; to write to Cleopatra, the only person capable of liberating her ; and artfully endeavour to pique her jealousy, by exalting the charms of her threatened rival ?”

“ Is it, then, to the affectionate forethought of Felix that I am indebted for your interference in my behalf ?”

“ Entirely. Remember, therefore, that if you succeed in effecting your escape, of which I entertain not a doubt, you will owe it quite as much to your lover as to Cleopatra.”

“ Brave, generous, noble-minded Felix ! Perhaps we may never meet again ; and I will confess that my heart could taste no peace, if I thought that I had entailed upon him the smallest penalty or disgrace. O my illustrious

benefactress! can you remove this load from my bosom? Can you lead me to hope that—”

“Discard your fears,” interposed Cleopatra. “Felix was placed under arrest by his uncle, a strict disciplinarian; but Antony knows not of his offence, and I will take care that he shall be quickly restored to the favour of Sosius.”

“For my dear father and kinsman, for Felix, for myself, I have a weight of gratitude to express which is swelling at my heart, and yet my lips know not how to give it utterance.”

“I am glad of it,” said Cleopatra, “for you must then talk of something else. Our business is settled—the affair of your escape is all arranged—let us now laugh and amuse ourselves, for the present moment is the sole happiness of which we can ever be assured.” Arraying her face in all the witchery of its dimpled smiles, giving the reins to her sportive imagination, and displaying the full brilliancy

of her playful wit, she now indulged in vivacious sallies, which might have been deemed the happy levity of a wild and thoughtless girl, but that occasionally some evidence of deep feeling would show that her heart was too sensitive to be altogether abandoned to frivolity, while now and then a dash of melancholy, throwing its shade across her features, would betray the hollowness of the gaiety she assumed. Nevertheless its fascination was so irresistible, that her audientress still continued to listen and admire, unconscious of the lapse of time, until Cleopatra started up suddenly, upon hearing a trumpet without, and exclaimed, "I must be gone—forget not my instructions—my orders; dare not to deviate from them, unless you would convert me into an irreconcilable enemy; and remember, that however much you may dread the love of Antony, it is not half so terrible as the hatred of Cleopatra!" Her enchanting smiles had all flown, and a fierce, a menacing,

almost a vengeful expression sate upon her features, as with a gesture of haughty warning she held up her hand, and disappeared through the aperture of the wall.

In the restored solitude, silence, and increasing darkness of her prison; Zillah could scarcely persuade herself that she had not been deluded by some delightful vision, the phantasy of an excited imagination. But the exquisite melody of Cleopatra's voice was still delicious in her ear; the bag containing the disguise was lying at her feet; the stairs by which she was to escape were still dimly visible in the wall; and, as she recalled the gloomy and desperate thoughts in which she was plunged before this day-star of hope and joy had been sent to cheer her with its unexpected light, she poured forth her thanks to Heaven for that which she considered to be a signal and manifest interposition in her favour. Night's approach was now hailed as the harbinger of her deliverance

and happiness. Far different were her thoughts, as she again seated herself at the window, from those which had lately harrowed her bosom when she occupied the same position. As the stars came twinkling forth from their chambers in the firmament, she contemplated them as the miraculous fires which were to light her out of this Egyptian wilderness ; and as the rising moon diffused an effulgence upon the waters, which stole along like a sweet smile, winning its way until it had silvered over the bickering glare shed upon the sea from the blaze of the Pharos, she was filled with a solemn and exceeding joy, for she knew that the hour of her outgoing from the Castle of Dagon was now fast approaching. When the welcome light shone into her apartment, she walked up and down, for her impatience would no longer allow her to sit still, watching at every turn the progress of the slowly moving ray ; and it still wanted nearly an hour of midnight when she

opened the bag, and began to array herself in the disguise. It was a garment which Cleopatra herself had worn when it pleased her to personate the goddess Isis, the robe being decorated with the symbols of that deity, and the head-dress being a lofty garland of leaves, corn, and artificial peaches, interwoven together. Having completed this investiture, without knowing what it was intended to represent, Zillah tore one of the window-curtains, in obedience to the directions she had received, entered the aperture of the wall, carefully closed the spring-mirror behind her, and dropping the bag that had contained her disguise, began to ascend the stairs, which were now shrouded in total darkness. A dim light, however, gleaming from the opening into the festive hall, soon became perceptible; it increased as she proceeded, and the sounds of merriment and revelry, growing louder and louder as she advanced, announced to her that the orgies were begun. Upon ap-

proaching the landing-place, she stepped slowly and with caution, in the apprehension that she might be discovered from below ; but she was at length enabled to conceal herself behind the palm-leaved capital of a massive column, where she could partially observe the proceedings beneath her without being herself visible.

Massive golden chandeliers suspended from the ceiling, and numerous lofty candelabra and lamps of alabaster arranged along the side of the hall, irradiated the whole spacious enclosure with the blaze of day ; the tables, encumbered with gorgeous plate, lofty Grecian vases sculptured with exquisite figures, and ponderous oriental censers, the sparkling of whose gold was quenched in the radiance of the jewelry with which they were embossed, displayed that wasteful and insane profusion which constituted Mark Antony's sole notion of magnificence ; the nobility and the priesthood in their robes of ceremony, and the ladies of the court in their

gala-dresses, resplendent with diamond blazonry, were ranged along the various tables: at the head of which sate the Triumvir, magnificently attired as the god Bacchus, having on his right hand Cleopatra, the enchantress of all eyes and hearts, not less voluptuous and lovely than the Queen of Love, whose garb and attributes she had assumed for the night. Cupids, and beautiful damsels representing the Nymphs and Graces, were in attendance upon the royal and divine pair, as if to complete their living apotheosis, and to offer by their light, lovely, and radiant forms, a strange contrast to the opposite extremity of the hall, where sate enthroned the great veiled figure of Isis, within an enclosure, guarded at each angle by the gigantic black granite statue of an Egyptian deity, stern, solemn, terrific, and rendered still more hideous by the red glare thrown from the flaming altar in front of the shrine.

As if determined that the preposterous incon-

sistency with which he supported the character of a god, should at least equal the monstrous impiety of its assumption, Antony, living in perpetual terror of being poisoned by the woman upon whom he doated, made Cleopatra publicly taste all the viands of which he partook, lest his immortality should be brought to a quick and fatal conclusion. These suspicions, although quite consistent with such love as he was capable of feeling, were little calculated, it might be thought, to promote his enjoyment of the festival, or even of life itself. And yet they seemed not to check the flow of his intemperate and boisterous hilarity. Well challenging his claim to the divinity of Bacchus, so far as deep potations could confirm it, he quaffed goblet after goblet, indulging the while in such ribaldry of conversation as was much more congenial to the camp than the court, and came with a revolting impropriety from the mouth of a pseudo-divinity, speaking in the

presence of priests and ladies. The coarse-minded Romans received these vulgar sallies with shouts of applause, while the more refined Cleopatra, looking at one of her female friends, cast up her eyes with an expression of contemptuous disgust.

At length, silence being proclaimed by a crier, the Priest of Isis, standing beside the altar, pronounced in a loud voice, "The health of the god Antony! and may the sacrifices and libations which he now offers to his sister Isis be propitiously accepted!" At the same time he poured perfumed oil upon the flame, and the band, as it had been previously concerted, struck up Antony's march. This was the signal for Zillah. Commending herself to Heaven in a short prayer, she stepped upon the narrow cornice with a throbbing heart, and keeping her eyes fixed upon the wall, while she waved her hand rejectingly to-

wards the assemblage below, she proceeded with a slow and steady pace along her perilous path.

Cleopatra was the first to startle the echoing hall with a fearful shriek, as she pointed at the apparition, screaming out, “The Goddess! the Goddess! she rejects the offerings!—and see, see! the fire of the altar has gone out!” and she fell back in her chair, apparently overcome with dread. Owing to the great height of the cornice, none of the guests below could perceive its projection, and they might therefore be well excused for imagining that the offended goddess was actually treading the air, and about to visit them, perhaps, with some terrible infliction. There was a momentary pause of silence, awe, horror, such as that wherewith we may imagine the Babylonian reveller and his courtiers to have been smitten when they saw the Angel hand inscribing strange characters upon the wall. The musicians suddenly ceased—the instruments

fell from their hands,—the priests threw themselves prostrate before the altar,—some shrieked aloud—aghast and petrified, others pointed to the moving prodigy in an agony of dumb terror ;—consternation and shuddering amazement sate upon every countenance. But this transfixed seizure soon became a rushing panic fear ; they who were nearest to the great doors burst out of the hall with loud cries ; the contagion of flight rapidly spread itself ; Antony and Cleopatra themselves, in spite of their assumed divinity, and the royal diadem they wore, offered to their guests the humiliating spectacle of a disorderly retreat ; and in a few minutes the silent, lonely hall, with its lamps still blazing, the gorgeous vases and goblets flickering in their own golden light, their gems twinkling like stars, the censers breathing up their rich perfumes, and the costly feast outspread upon the tables, were all abandoned to the veiled Goddess, and to the granite giants, who seemed

to be left as the grim guardians of the deserted banquet.

The superstitious Antony, hurrying to the penetralia of his palace, summoned the priests of Isis, that they might solve the meaning of the prodigy. At this period, his attachment to Cleopatra was so far from having reached the point of infatuation which it subsequently attained, that he had repeatedly refused to bestow upon her the little Island of Cyprus. Resolved to extort from his fears what she could not wheedle from his love, she had devised for this purpose the manœuvre of Zillah's apparition. Tutored by her, the colluding priests, who had extinguished the fire of the altar, persuaded Antony that the goddess had rejected his offerings, because he had refused to confer upon her favourite Cleopatra the Island of Cyprus, which she had so often solicited. She had lately rebuilt upon its shores a dilapidated temple of Isis, and the goddess manifestly wished the

entire sovereignty to be vested in her who had shown such piety in restoring her worship. To make atonement for his error, Antony instantly saluted her as Queen of Cyprus. Cleopatra's stratagem had completely succeeded. She had at once got rid of a threatened rival, and won by artifice (which, in her eyes, enhanced its value,) a rich and productive island. To prove that the offended deity was now appeased, she shortly proposed a repetition of the festival, at which it is needless to record that the fire upon the altar burned with an auspicious brightness, and that no menacing apparition came to startle and appal the guests in the midst of their hilarity.

Zillah, in the mean while, having completed her airy march in perfect safety, though not without occasional trepidation, entered the passage in the wall that had been indicated to her, found the secret stairs, descended them, and proceeded onwards in the deep darkness till she

came to a closed door, when she pronounced the word “Anubis !” It was repeated from the other side ; the door opened, and she beheld a female with a lantern, who began instantly and in silence to divest her of her disguise ; at the conclusion of which she said, “Follow me, and utter not a word.”

In obedience to this command, Zillah proceeded for some time along a narrow subterranean passage, which, dark and gloomy as it was, filled her heart at every step with an increasing exhilaration, from the conviction that she was leaving behind her the palace, the fortress, and all the horrors that had threatened her within their precincts, and at the same time momentarily drawing nearer to her father, to liberty, and to happiness. Their progress was at length stopped by a low door, which her conductress unlocked and opened, when they found themselves within a theatre, whose vastness was rather to be inferred by the hollow echoes of their

feet, than by the evidence of their eyes ; for the feeble light of the lantern, although it continually revealed successive ranges of stone seats, was swallowed up by the darkness before it reached the boundary walls. This enclosure was traversed, and another small door was opened, when Zillah, with a delight that thrilled deliciously through her bosom, and seemed to imbue the very air with a taste of freedom and joy, stepped into one of the public streets of Alexandria. They crossed it, and proceeded down another, until they reached a detached building, at the door of which her conductress knocked gently, saying, “ This is the house of the Alabarch of the Jews.”

The half-distracted Sagan, unable to sleep, was sitting with his friends in deep deliberation as to the measures to be adopted for their own safety, and for the recovery of their lost Zillah. Fearful of pursuit and arrest, they at first hesitated about answering the summons from with-

out. Gabriel looked from an upper window, in order to ascertain the quality of such suspicious visitants, before they received admittance. A glimpse was sufficient: the door flew open, and in another moment the transported Zillah was fast locked in the arms of her father.

CHAPTER III.

WITHOUT attempting to describe the scene of tenderness and transport occasioned by this unexpected meeting, we proceed to state, that the Hebrews, being furnished with horses and money for their journey by their good friend the Alabarch, left Alexandria in the morning, as soon as the gates were opened, and hurried forward, in an easterly direction, scarcely venturing to look behind them for fear of pursuit, and endeavouring, as much as possible, to avoid observation from wayfarers of every description. The inhabitants of Alexandria, who were already in commotion and alarm, as the portentous apparition

at the festival began to be eagerly buzzed about the city, little dreamed that the imagined goddess was timidly stealing away from the walls ; and Zillah could hardly believe in her own identity, when she reflected, that, but a few hours ago, she had scared the whole assembled court from their banquet, while, at the present moment, she could not encounter the humblest individual without a feeling of apprehension. For these fears, however, natural as they were, there was not the smallest foundation ; the travellers pursued their way unquestioned, and though they avoided any such exertion of speed as might excite suspicion, they had, ere long, left Alexandria at a considerable distance behind them, and striking out of the high road, according to the instructions they had received, they found themselves in a wild and unfrequented district, where, being relieved from all fear of immediate pursuit, they ventured at length to halt under a clump of palm-trees, to

afford their horses a short respite. Now that Zillah was safe, Gabriel's solicitude on the subject of his darling jewels recovered its ascendancy in his mind; and, in spite of the remonstrances of his companions, who were eager to push forward, he insisted on withdrawing its precious contents from the box, and secreting them about his person and garments, before they proceeded any farther. To this process he attached too much importance to effect it in a hasty or imperfect manner: it was, however, at length completed, and they renewed their journey, every hour inspiring them with fresh confidence that their escape from Egypt would be happily accomplished. At this prospect, coupled as it was with the recovery and concealment of his gems, Gabriel became so elated, that he snapped his fingers, and shouted aloud the chorus of his friend Jonathan the Tanner's Bacchanalian song, being the first time he had indulged himself with his favourite distich for a

considerable period. Simon, instead of gazing like his companions at the fine prospect of the Lake Mareotis, and the towers and temples of the city beyond it, was busy in inspecting the arms with which they had been provided at Alexandria; observing, as he drew himself upright, and grasped his sword, that he should not object to being again made prisoner by the uncircumcised Pagans, if he could previously have a fair fight for it; but that it was gall and wormwood to his soul, to be caught like a trapped chameleon, as had been the case when the pirate Salvius had surprised their ship. Once, indeed, as his eye fell upon the fertile district of the Delta surrounding them, he remarked, it was no wonder the temples were so stately and magnificent, since the people must be well able to pay tithes; expressing, at the same time, a great wish to know the salaries of the inferior priests, and whether they were

obliged to perform menial offices, and sing in rotation, like the poor Levites.

Although the spot they occupied commanded a view of Alexandria and all the intervening country, and thus enabled them to ascertain that they were unmenaced by pursuit, Zillah's apprehensions, and the Sagan's impatience, urging them forward, they resumed their journey; keeping at no great distance from the coast, and directing their route by a small chart, with which the provident Alabarch had furnished them. He had also supplied them with provisions, that they might not be under the necessity of seeking an inn; so that, when their horses required a bait of some continuance, they drew up on another eminence crowned with mulberry-trees, whence they could observe the approach of any suspicious wayfarers, and, seating themselves upon the ground, partook of the first meal which they had for a long time enjoyed in the

inexpressible luxury of liberty. This circumstance, combined with the prospect of soon beholding their native country, not only elevated every heart, but imparted a more exquisite perception of pleasure to every sense. The air seemed more fresh, sweet, and balmy ; the water with which they slaked their thirst more pure and bright ; the earth and sky invested with richer and more beautiful hues ; the song of the birds, and the music of the breeze amid the mulberry-trees, more cheerful and melodious, than in any other country of the world, not even excepting their beloved Palestine : such enchantment does the mind diffuse around it when it is buoyant and gladsome in the first consciousness of recovered freedom. As if to make the heart of Zillah sympathize more deliciously with Nature, and exalt its sweet and tender sensations into rapture, the Sagan and Gabriel were enthusiastic, almost to rivalry, in their grateful encomiums of Felix ;, each con-

tending for the honour of having first discovered that he was infinitely superior to the rest of the Pagans, and both eulogizing the generous though rash ardour that had prompted him to attempt her rescue from the soldiers, not less than the subsequent forethought and penetration which had directed him to secure the interference of Cleopatra by piquing her jealousy. Zillah listened to their praises in blushing silence, but the dews of Hermon could not fall more gratefully upon the parched and withered herbage of summer, than did this welcome incense upon her long-agitated and almost exhausted heart. Simon was the only one who ventured to dissent from the laudatory strain of his companions; observing, that though the young Roman might be a brave soldier, he had by no means proved himself to be a good one; since, if he had waited till the escort had passed, and then unexpectedly attacked them in the rear, Zillah might have escaped in the first con-

fusion, which she could never have done when they were assaulted in front. His modesty prompted him to add, that he would not have hazarded this opinion, but that having occasionally done duty as one of the Temple guard, he must, of course, know something of military tactics.

Procuring accommodations for the night at a large village, which had been indicated to them by the Alabarch, our wearied travellers gladly retired to rest, not less desirous to avoid observation from the peasantry, than to procure that repose of which they all stood so much in need. At an early hour of the following morning, they renewed their journey with fresh strength and spirits, passing many of the industrious villagers, who were already at work in the open air, weaving cloth for sails and tents. During the whole of this day they travelled through a beautiful district, taking an inland direction, to the southward of Damietta, abun-

dantly irrigated with little streams, which divided the whole territory into a succession of gardens. The first rains having begun to fall, every thing was fresh and verdant; the rivulets gamboled along their channels, sparkling and making a pleasant music, as if they rejoiced in their recovered vigour: notwithstanding the lateness of the season, many of the palm, pomegranate, olive, and plum-trees, were laden with ungathered fruits; and the latter grapes still remained in luxuriant clusters upon the vines. Their next day's progress carried them into a much more sterile and unlovely scenery, which, in their successive journeys, became gradually more wild and desolate, until, at length, they beheld in the distance the great wilderness extending to Beersheba, and the chain of mountains that run from Mount Seir to the sea. The part, however, which they had to traverse was by no means a desert, in the modern acceptation of that term, but an

extensive tract of uncultivated country, which in these days would be called a continued common, provided with rude inns at stated distances, for the accommodation of travellers between Egypt and Judæa. Upon the margin of this dreary tract our Hebrews were seated at their daily meal, which they always preferred taking in the open air. The place they had chosen was beneath a ledge of earth and rocks, covered with heath and immense bushes of tamarisk, while before them lay outstretched the shaggy, haggard, and apparently interminable wilderness, broken by remote clumps of palms, which only served to mark the great extent of the waste beyond. Where they sate, a few scattered olives relieved, by their cool dim green, the glare of the sky, for the mid-day sun was still fierce and sultry ; and though the scenery was such as we have described, it was neither undivested of animation in the foreground, nor was the distance without a mourn-

ful magnificence, even in the midst of its desolation. Wild goats and saphans were seen leaping upon the rocks that wound down into the plain ; brilliant butterflies, like winged tulips, were hovering in the air ; grasshoppers were jumping and chirping in the herbage ; painted lizards basked in the sun ; ringdoves and turtles were cooing in the olive-trees ; and, at no great distance, a party of travellers were seen winding up out of the wilderness, the uncouth figures and patient looks of their heavily-laden camels according well with the scene, while the faint tinkling of their bells formed a not uncongenial harmony with the plaintive murmur of the doves. The attention of the Hebrews was, however, more particularly attracted to another spot, where a hart was teaching his young one to leap amid the bushes ; and they were admiring the graceful vaults of the former, not less than the playful gambols of the fawn, when an immense bear burst through the

crashing tamarisks above them with an appalling roar, leaped over the heads of the whole party, and plunged into the underwood in pursuit of the unfortunate deer. In his spring from the ledge above he had detached some of the earth and large stones, which fell upon Zillah, and beat her to the ground. She was only slightly bruised ; but the terror and sudden shock proved too much for a mind exhausted by the fatigues of travelling, and the previous anguish and agitations to which she had been exposed. For the last two or three days she had felt the approach of sickness, although she had suppressed the fact in her anxiety to reach Palestine : but it was now no longer to be concealed ; her debility, her faint shudderings, her looks, betrayed her state to her companions, who instantly decided not to attempt the passage of the wilderness, which would demand increased exertions, until her strength should be restored.

At a little distance from them was a strag-

gling village, the usual halting-place of parties emerging from the wilderness, or about to cross it. Thither they retired, and easily discovered the inn; a building of some extent, which promised as good accommodation as they could have anticipated; but it contained no other tenant for the moment than a little girl, whose language they could not understand. The landlord, it subsequently appeared, was a breeder of fighting-rams, and had gone to preside at a pitched battle between one of his own combatants and a horned rival from the next village; a contest of such general interest, that his whole household, and most of his neighbours, had accompanied him. Gabriel wandered to the field of battle, a rude shealing for sheep or goats, within which he beheld two enraged rams making furious onsets upon one another, while around this rustic arena was collected a group of sun-burnt peasants, half-naked children, and their swarthy mothers, shouting and gesticulating as

their respective champions prevailed, their dark eager eyes glittering in the sun, and all too busy to attend to any thing but the battle before them. Gabriel was obliged to wait patiently till it was concluded ; when the landlord, exhilarated by the victory of his favourite ram, accompanied him back to the inn, promising to render his new inmates as comfortable as the nature of his establishment would allow. Although larger than the other houses of the village, it was not less rude and primitive in the mode of its construction, being only one story high, built of unburnt bricks, its floors of earth strewn with rushes, and its principal room, common to all comers, having only an earthen seat that ran round the walls, and was covered with mats. The chambers, however, were tolerably spacious, and a bed-room, somewhat more civilized in its appearance than the other apartments, having been secured for Zillah, the Sagan determined to remain there until she should

be in a condition to resume her journey. Rest and tranquillity he believed to be the only restoratives she required ; indeed they were all she could obtain, unless he had chosen to take advice from the barbarous practitioners among the goatherds, whose *materia medica* consisted of little more than spells, charms, and incantations.

Quiet was easily ensured ; but the peace of mind, upon which the fond father had so confidently relied, proved to be of more difficult attainment. In the solicitude and bustle of her escape from Alexandria, Zillah's thoughts had found little leisure to revert to Felix, who remained a prisoner upon her account. As the fears of pursuit, however, subsided, this reflection suggested itself with an increasing pertinacity ; and now that she was stationary and unoccupied, it obtained a painful predominance in her mind,—an ascendancy rendered still more harassing by her secret consciousness that it

was prompted by an attachment too deep and tender to be easily eradicated. She felt humiliated at the idea that Cleopatra should have discovered her weakness, and degraded in her own eyes, when she accused herself of having resigned her heart to a man who had never made any formal declaration of his love :—and that man too a Pagan, between whom and every pious Hebrew maiden there ought to be a gulph as impassable as the Great Sea itself. True, he might embrace the religion of the Hebrews ; she had begun a conversion, which she trusted his own reflections would complete ; but even then he was a Roman, the enemy of her country, whose sword might at every moment be brandished against the throats of her kindred ; and to crown the absurdity and indelicacy of the passion to which she had given admission in her bosom, she neither knew whether she should ever again behold its object, nor if she did, had she the smallest warrant for concluding that he

would overlook the numerous obstacles to their union, and reciprocate her love. Under these circumstances, she contemplated her feelings as criminal, and struggled so vehemently to subdue them, that the conflict of her mind aggravated her bodily disorder. A low fever was the consequence, which, in spite of the unremitting attentions of her father and Gabriel, continued to depress her for several days, so that three weeks had elapsed before she had recovered sufficient strength to attempt the passage of the wilderness.

In spite of the secret disquietude and inward melancholy which still hung heavily upon her heart, she assumed, as much as possible, the appearance of her usual placid equanimity, and even wore an air of cheerfulness, as she set about the preparations for departure. These were soon completed: their little store of provisions was packed up, they mounted their horses, and, ascending the eminence terminated

by the rocky ledge whence the bear had bounded, once more beheld the vast wilderness outspread before them. A small caravan, marching in a straggling and disorderly manner, was just emerging from a thicket of wild olive-trees and clumps of tamarisk. Some of the camels and one of the elephants were lame, others were without any burthen upon their backs; there were several litters apparently carrying wounded people; the great drum, which usually announced the hour of march, was broken; while the forlorn dejected air of the whole escort, covered as it was with the white dust of the desert, and moving forward with evident difficulty, seemed to intimate that it had met with some catastrophe. It was soon explained by those who headed the straggling procession,—swarthy, turbaned, wild-looking men from the borders of the Red Sea, and the sunny depths of Arabia. They had been attacked, and after a desperate conflict defeated and pillaged, by a

numerous band of robbers in the mountains beyond the wilderness; the same troop which had so long ravaged the provinces of Palestine, and which was commanded by the celebrated and not less formidable Jareb the Revenger, who, after a temporary absence, had rejoined *his little army of banditti, and had signalized his return by this daring exploit.* In detailing their misfortune, the grief and rage of the narrators seemed to be renewed; some burst into bitter imprecations, and, as they pointed to their pillaged camels, stamped upon the ground, tore their beards, and gnashed their teeth with all the intemperance of Oriental passion; while others stalked along with a scowl of silent bitterness, that appeared to have not yet lost all hope of revenge. Emptied as were most of the skins and bales, the air was still perfumed with the fragrance of the rich gums and spices they had contained; the sole evidence now left to these unfortunate travellers of the valuable

merchandize they had once possessed. At the sight of their destitute condition, Gabriel's blood tingled in his veins, for the thought of the concealed jewels so unexpectedly recovered, and to which he felt his attachment increase, in proportion as they became menaced with new dangers. Every enquiry convincing him that there was at present no possibility of passing the mountains without a military escort, he submitted to the Sagan the propriety of returning to the inn, that they might deliberate upon their future proceedings : a suggestion to which the latter, terrified at the prospect of exposing his daughter to fresh perils, gave an eager assent.

“ Surely, my dear father,” said Zillah, as they resumed possession of their apartment, “ we are singularly unfortunate, to be thus beleaguered and beset both by sea and land, whithersoever, in short, we turn our steps. Nabal predicted that I should encounter many dangers,

but why should we be environed with more perils than other travellers?"

"Alas! my child, we are not: but we have fallen upon evil days, an iron age, a time of almost universal violence and rapine, for which we are to thank these pests and scourges of mankind, the Romans. Their ambition carries them to the uttermost bounds of the earth; aggression begets reprisal, and war becomes the business of the world. They break in pieces the armies that are opposed to them; the scattered bands, having acquired a distaste for the arts of peace, disperse and become wandering banditti. Some nations, conquered by land, still struggle for liberty upon the sea; their fleets are defeated, but every scattered vessel becomes a pirate. Insurgent slaves, and fugitive gladiators, swell the ranks of the sea-rover and the freebooters upon shore; so that, although there may be security and peace in the immediate vicinity of the Roman fleets and armies,

every where else there is lawlessness and outrage. Raca ! may the evil Angel Sammael have them for a portion !”

“ O that I had never quitted Jerusalem !” ejaculated Zillah, whose self-upbraiding thoughts were again reverting to Felix.

“ Would that I had left thee there, my child ! How vain are the plans of mortals ! I meant to carry thee from the storm, to place thee in an ark of safety, and lo ! I have led thy footsteps into the midst of the snares and pitfalls.”

It was decided that they should remain at the inn until they learned that the banditti had quitted the mountains; unless in the mean time some escort should present itself sufficiently strong to secure them from attack. The latter protection offered itself sooner than they had anticipated. By the arrival of fresh travellers, all of whom halted at the village, afraid to traverse the wilderness without a guard, they learned

that a small detachment of Ethiopians, coming from Alexandria, was then marching for Palestine, in order to join the rest of their cohort, who were with Herod's army. At the mention of Alexandria and the cause of Herod, both the Sagan and Zillah were filled with new apprehensions, which Gabriel, however, removed, by urging the impossibility of their being recognized, and reminding them that the danger of encountering the banditti was much more formidable than the chance of any molestation from these wild Cushites. Emboldened by such assurances, they determined to await the arrival of the troops, and march with them into Palestine ; carefully concealing from these Herodian auxiliaries that they were the agents of King Antigonos.

On the following day, the Ethiopians arrived, startling the village by their barbaric music, and attracting all eyes by their white dresses and turbans, their savage aspect, uncouth-looking

weapons, and the broad polished plates around their naked arms and legs. A few horse-soldiers accompanied the baggage-waggons, the whole detachment being commanded by an effeminate-looking Roman stripling, whose fair complexion, splendid armour, and perfumed locks, presented a singular contrast to the rude equipment of his sable army. In one respect, however, he proved himself as well acquainted with the usages of war as any veteran; for he no sooner found that several travellers were waiting to accompany the troops, than he extorted a sum of money from each as the price of his protection. This being willingly paid beforehand, the whole party having made the requisite preparations, departed from the village, and presently plunged into the thickets and overgrowth of the wilderness.

Several times did the young Roman address his conversation to the Hebrews, talking in a flippant and affected style of the recent occur-

rence in the Hall of Isis at Alexandria, and dwelling so pointedly upon the finesse and cunning of Cleopatra, that Zillah began to fear he knew more of the real nature of the transaction than he chose at present to reveal ; especially as he eyed her occasionally with a particular notice. Nor were her companions less alarmed, when he talked of Mark Antony as his friend and patron, abused King Antigonus as an usurper, and declared that, if any of his adherents fell into his hands, he should treat them as rebels and traitors. It was a terrible trial to Zillah, that she could not interrogate him concerning the safety of Felix, and his restoration to the favour of the general ; but she was too discreet to propose a question which might have excited his suspicions, and have led perhaps to the most perilous results.

The wearisome wilderness was traversed without any incident worth recording, and they were now close upon the range of hills forming the

western frontier of Judæa, when the young Roman officer, although he laughed at the idea of regular troops being attacked by a disorderly band of robbers, thought it prudent to send forward his horse to reconnoitre a long and narrow defile through which the road lay. On their return, they reported that they had examined the whole pass, as far as the opening on the other side of the mountains, without discovering an enemy of any sort; and the party accordingly moved forward in the full assurance of safety. The defile was not only narrow in itself, but the rocks on either side were so high and black as to exclude the sun, and impart a sinister gloom to the enclosure. For some time the road shelved rapidly down to a runnel that crossed it, after which it again ascended with equal abruptness. The detachment had reached this central point, and both men and horses were refreshing themselves with the clear stream, when a flight of arrows from some unseen bow-

men stretched several of the party writhing upon the ground, or rolling in the water, which they suddenly dyed with their blood. Modern warfare scarcely allows of any attack so terrible as this. Musketry and cannon not only betray by their brazen throats the source of an assault, but drown the groans of the wounded, and madden with their noise the courage of the assaulted warrior, as the roar of the wild `beast inflames the wrath of his antagonist. An arrow from an invisible bow appals by its uncertainty, and unmans the stoutest heart by allowing the scream of anguish to thrill through the ear. Such was the effect of the first volley upon the Ethiopians in the defile. A second discharge, levelled with still more fatal certainty, completed their bewilderment and consternation; and before they could recover themselves, the banditti, issuing from their hiding-places in the caves and chasms of the rocks, rolled down huge crags and stones upon their unfortunate

victims, miserably crushing some, and blocking up the road against the advance of the survivors, while the baggage-waggons answered the same purpose in the rear.

In a moment the gloomy pass was a scene of indescribable tumult, agony, and destruction. The horses plunged, snorted, screamed, and leaping madly amid the foot-soldiers, increased the general havoc and confusion. Unable to fight or fly, the black Ethiopians, rolling their infuriated eyes around them, gnashed their teeth in despair, and discharged their arrows at random, amid groans, outcries, and execrations; while the banditti above them made the rocks ring with shouts of joy, insolence, and triumph. In this trying extremity the young Roman proved himself more worthy of his nation than might have been anticipated from his effeminate appearance and demeanour. Encouraging his men both by his voice and his undaunted bearing, he rallied the scattered remnant of his

troops, put himself at their head, and, through the arrows and rolling fragments, made a desperate effort to pass the baggage-waggons, and regain the open country. As they rushed along for this purpose, carrying every thing before them, Zillah, who had dismounted, was separated from her friends, and thrown behind a crag, whence she saw the living torrent sweep tumultuously towards the waggons, leaving the road unoccupied, except by the dying and the dead. By the cries, and the clashing of swords, she concluded that the battle was renewed beyond the carriages ; but it was not of long continuance ; the remaining Ethiopians had cut their way through into the open country, and the returning robbers spread themselves tumultuously along the defile, to ascertain what booty they had made. Two of them discovered Zillah, as she leaned trembling and aghast against the crag. “ Kedar, my beauty ! I worship thee,” exclaimed one of them. “ By Cherem and

Shamathah ! she is a stately lass, and worthy to be a Corban to our noble captain. Let us lead her to his tent." So saying, they took her unresisting arms, for she was in a state of passive bewilderment, and, passing through the narrow ravine made by the brook, carried her to the back of the rocks; where a black tent was pitched among the broken crags, which it so much resembled in colour as not to be distinguished except upon a near approach. This they entered; and placing her upon a couch of rushes and leaves, covered with painted cloth, which had probably been plundered from the caravan, they again retreated, carefully closing the entrance.

Zillah's impaired health so little qualified her to endure a shock and surprise of this nature, that she had been, in the first instance, overcome, nor did she immediately recover a perfect consciousness of what had happened. When she could collect her faculties, her first thought

was of her father, her second was of her own escape; and she was rising up to try whether she might not perchance slip out of the tent, when the sackcloth at the entrance was thrown back, and Esau, the self-styled "Wild Man of the Mountains," rushed into it. His appearance was flushed and disordered: the heat and the blood of battle were still upon him: it might have been conjectured that he was still inflamed with all its passions, for his looks were wild and menacing as those of a distracted person. Both uttered an exclamation of utter amazement as they recognized each other; but Zillah's surprise was unmingled with terror, for she believed that she had found a friend in her anticipated enemy. "Is it possible," she said, "that I behold Esau?—him whom I so lately left in the island of Sicily?—him whom I first encountered beneath the walls of the Holy City?"

"No!" was the reply, uttered in a loud and terrible voice: "I am now Jareb the Revenger!"

—Adoni-bezek, the lightning of the Lord!—Harod, astonishment and fear! one who has sworn never to spare man in his wrath, nor woman in his desire; and well art thou here, my beauty, to enable me to fulfil my vow. Come, then, to mine arms, and kiss me with thy lips, for thy love is better than wine.” Scared at his wild looks, not less than at his proffered embraces, Zillah started from him, exclaiming, “What mean you, terrible and mysterious man? Your looks are those of madness!—you know not what you say!—never, never can you meditate outrage and violence against her whom you have hitherto followed with gentle purpose and friendly warning.”

“I was then in hopes of gaining that which I have now lost. Mad, did you say? Who would not be raving, distracted, if, like me, he had been twice robbed of his love? One, upon whom I doated, was stabbed in my arms; another has been stolen from my embraces;—but thou—

thou shalt be mine, ere fate or fortune can snatch thee from me. Come, then, my beauty, let us not trust to the future, but snatch the present moment."

"I implore you, by all that is pure and holy!" exclaimed Zillah, falling on her knees.

"In vain! you ask pity of the lion that has been twice robbed of his mate. I am desperate, raving, frantic, if you will; but I am not to be again defrauded; and thus—thus will I compel you to my wishes!"

He seized the arm of the shrieking Zillah, when, in her struggles to get loose from him, he caught hold of the necklace, and dragged the large star from her bosom. Its talismanic influence seemed instantly to have returned. Holding it in his trembling hand, he riveted his eyes upon it for a short time, during which all his savage and turbulent passions became gradually tamed, and he at length ejaculated, in an altered voice of tenderness and deep emotion,

“ Amazement ! it is the talisman ! My beautiful, my murdered Zaida, it was thine ! Forgive me, damsel, forgive me ! never will I harm the wearer of this precious, this sacred amulet. My heart throbs at the sight of it. By her who is no more, I swear to protect thee !” At these words he struck his hand sharply upon his forehead, and rushed out of the tent, leaving Zillah in such a tremor of agitation and astonishment, that she could hardly believe in the reality of the danger with which she had been menaced, nor account for the mysterious influence which had delivered her so unexpectedly from it. Esau, for by that name she still thought of him, seemed to her to have been visited by a temporary delirium, which the sight of the necklace had proved powerful enough to dispel ; but his derangement might return ; no reliance could be placed on the forbearance of so wild, mysterious, and inconsistent a being ; and she resolved therefore to fly

from the tent, and seek her friends while she was yet at liberty to do so. She passed out of it accordingly, and while gazing around her, uncertain what direction to take, she had the delight of seeing the Sagan and Gabriel speeding towards the spot where she stood, accompanied by Esau, mounted on the well-known black Arabian, and followed by Simon, leading the horse she had rode previously to the attack. "Wait not a moment for gratulations or enquiries," exclaimed Esau, in a hurried and agitated voice; "yonder is your road," and he pointed it out with his sword; "mount, damsel, mount, and be gone quickly, for my mind is unsettled, I know not sometimes what I do—I cannot answer for my own resolutions—fly, fly, fly!" Zillah was not slow in obeying the injunction; she vaulted into the saddle, called to her friends to follow her, and urged her horse rapidly forward in the direction that had been indicated; while Esau, striking his hand re-

peatedly upon his bosom, as if to still the throbbings of his heart, hurried to rejoin his troop, and disappeared.

When Zillah thought she might safely relax the extreme speed of her flight, which was not until the defile and the banditti had been left a long way behind her, she related to her friends the inexplicable demeanour of Esau in the tent, attributing it to temporary alienation of mind ; and the mysterious effect of the necklace, of which she was utterly unable to afford any plausible solution ; more especially when she recollected that the exclamations he had uttered, and the allusions to the murdered Zaida, were almost word for word the same that had been pronounced by the old Egyptian astrologer in the house of Mark Antony at Rome. Gabriel's curiosity was less excited by this circumstance, strange as it was, than by the fact that Esau no longer wore upon his finger the marvellous ruby ; and he regretted, that, in the hurry of

rejoining Zillah at the tent, he had quite forgotten to request a sight of it. To the Sagan and his daughter the impenetrable character and inscrutable motives of Esau formed a copious subject of conversation and wonder during the remainder of their journey, which was now rapidly drawing to a termination. On ascending the heights of Beth Dagon, they had the ineffable delight of once more beholding the white towers and walls of Jerusalem, reposing in solemn magnificence, and belted around with rocks and hills. "Solyma! Solyma! the Citadel of God!" shouted the Sagan, who was the first to discover it; "the chosen mountain of Jchovah! the perfection of beauty! the joy of the whole world! Hail to thee! hail to thee, Zion! Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness in thy palaces!" and in the enthusiasm of the moment he dismounted, kissed the ground, and, taking up a portion of the earth, pressed it to his heart, as if the very soil were

holy and precious. Tears of silent transport stole down Zillah's cheeks as she gazed; her feelings were too mighty for utterance; her bosom heaved with the swelling emotions of joy and gratitude, and for some time she could only look and weep. Gabriel snapped his fingers, and dismounted, and mounted again half a dozen times, in the unconscious impatience of his delight; while Simon, who had been able to distinguish the two Maccabee columns set up on Mount Sion, assumed an animated look and a perpendicular position upon his horse, and delivered himself of a most stentorian—"Mi camoca baelim Jchovah?" the war-cry of the family. In a moment after, however, as if determined to use his favourite exclamation, whatever might be the occasion or the nature of his feelings, he ejaculated, in a lower and more solemn tone of voice, "Amen, Amen. Selah!"

When they commenced the descent of the hill, they all joined in a Psalm, which it was

customary to sing upon returning to the Holy City; and in this state of excitement and rapture, after all their manifold perils, fatigues, and long travels, our rejoicing Hebrews once more entered within the walls of their beloved Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IV.

UPON the return of the travellers it was found that during their absence great alterations had occurred in the state of affairs. King Antigonus, abandoning himself more and more to the effeminate pleasures of his palace, as the precariousness of his usurped power became more manifest, and the necessity for vigorous measures more urgent and imperative, left every thing to the management of his ministers and generals. Of this supine and indolent sensuality the ambitious Sàlome, the wife of the Sagan, had taken full advantage. By her political intrigues, in conjunction with Tubal the chief of the Pharisees,

and Jesse the King's favourite, the trio had contrived to get into their hands the whole influence of the government, and the uncontrolled direction of public affairs. Nothing, however, had prospered under their administration. Pappus the Greek, whom they had appointed to the command of the Jewish forces, had indeed defeated the Herodian army, and slain its commander Joseph ;—but the active and undaunted Herod had no sooner put himself at the head of his scattered troops, whom he quickly reinforced with auxiliaries, than every thing was instantly changed. He obtained a signal victory over Pappus, who with the greater part of his army was left dead upon the field of battle ; and the soldiers and partisans of Antigonus, being no longer able to face their opponents in the open country, had been compelled to retreat to Jerusalem, and to console themselves by vaunting the impregnability of the Holy City. Recent occurrences, however, hav-

ing somewhat diminished the confidence of the inhabitants, and proved to them that their boasted ramparts were assailable, gloom and consternation, aggravated by factious dissensions among themselves, had thrown the whole city into disturbance. Parties and sects struggled furiously against one another ; plots against the King were formed, detected, and unrelentingly punished ; new conspiracies were hatched, and the intelligence that Antony had determined to support the cause of Herod, and dispatch a Roman army to assist in the siege of Jerusalem, threw the minds of the populace into a state of fermentation which was perpetually outbursting into clamour and tumult, sometimes directed against the usurping monarch who had exposed them to this jeopardy, and at others assuming the character of fierce and fanatical denunciations against the accursed Pagans who should dare to come up in hostile array against the City of God, the mountain of holiness, the

beautiful bulwark of the heavenly King, the lovely, the sacred, the august Solyma !

After the travellers had made a solemn expiation for all the offences against the ceremonial law, or other crimes which they might have committed during their peregrinations among the heathen, the Sagan and his kinsman proceeded to the palace, to communicate to the King the result of their mission. Gabriel had arranged his jewels in their most attractive form, relying mainly upon their influence for procuring a favourable reception, in which he was not altogether disappointed. Although his visitors approached Antigonus in their diplomatic character, and with intelligence of no mean importance to his future fate, he was too ill or too indolent to move from the banquet-table at which he was seated with Lydia his favourite concubine, his inseparable companion Jesse, and others of the same stamp, for whose recreation and his own, female dancers were exhibiting

their voluptuous movements in accordance with the melting strains of flutes and dulcimers, while the atmosphere of the magnificent saloon was saturated with the perfumes fuming up from golden censers, mingled with the natural fragrance of aromatic shrubs and flowers. Into this most unusual audience-chamber, the music and the dancers having previously been dismissed, the Sagan and his kinsman were ushered. Antigonus, who seemed to have become much more enervated, both mentally and corporeally, by his excesses, received his ambassador with a languid smile of recognition ; and instead of propounding any question on the subject of his mission, enquired whether he had brought back with him his stately and beautiful daughter, whose face and form he declared that he perfectly remembered, though he had forgotten her name. Lydia tossed her head scornfully, observing in a loud whisper to Jesse, that those

who had once seen the Sphynx, or any other such monstrous idol, were not likely to forget it. The Sagan answered the question, and was waiting in expectation of some more pertinent interrogatories, when Gabriel, who thought that the whole importance of the embassy resolved itself into the recovery of the jewels, opened his case and displayed its sparkling contents before the eyes of the assemblage. "Hishtommoth!" ejaculated Lydia, starting up and clapping her hands in ecstasy,—“What a splendid collection! The pectoral of the High Priest, when compared with it, is but as the twinkling of a star to the blaze of the meridian sun. What a glorious carbuncle! surely it must be on fire. This golden Chrysolite is ten times purer than mine; and yonder pearl pear is an absolute beauty. Does it not remind you, King, of your promise to give me one?”

“It reminds me rather of Solomon’s pro-

verb," said Antigonus, " that a fair woman without discretion is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout."

" Excellent!" shouted the courtiers with an obsequious laugh, all of them rejoicing in the mortification of Lydia :—" who so witty as the King? who so ready with his repartee?"

" By the Shamaim, and by Ashemoth of Samaria!" cried Jesse, " yonder ruby would just replace the ring which I lost in stopping the King's horse when it took fright at the flapping of the great Maccabee banner."—" Wear it for my sake, then," said Antigonus, presenting it to him; " that which Ahasuerus gave to Mordecai could neither be more rare nor better merited." Upon this hint all the courtiers had presently found a tongue and lost a jewel. Never was such a careless or unlucky set. One had dropped a signet from his finger, another the jeweled clasp of his girdle, a third the precious stone that fastened his sandal; and

by a singular coincidence, each of the lost ornaments bore a marvellous resemblance to some individual gem in the collection of Gabriel. Such was the infatuation and imbecility of both King and courtiers that they totally forgot for the moment the purport of the Sagan's visit, or the result of his embassy, in the superior interest of these glittering baubles, which they admired with puerile transport, and of which each endeavoured to obtain some portion by the same finesse as Jesse's, or by a selfish sycophancy which experience had taught them to be the most effectual means of cajoling their effeminate King. Gabriel, in the mean while, leaving the Sagan's message and the war with the Romans to come after his own explanations relative to the casket and its contents, began a narrative of his adventures, or rather of the adventures of the jewels; magnifying the perils to which their bearer had been exposed, and extolling so preposterously the forethought,

address, and courage, to which alone their preservation was attributable, that the Sagan, who knew their recovery to be merely accidental, felt himself called upon to interpose. "Peace ! peace, good Gabriel !" he exclaimed. "Remember that the breath of self-praise soils the mouth of the speaker, even as the censer is dimmed by the smoke of its own perfume. It is fortunate that we have brought back the deposit with which we were entrusted, since it affords so much gratification to the King. Is it the pleasure of Antigonus that I should repeat to him here the message with which I am charged from Mark Antony ?"

"Ay ; I should have asked you for it sooner. What says the proud Pagan ?"

The Sagan repeated the hostile message, which produced an effect he scarcely anticipated. Antigonus, who had been of a daring and impetuous temperament before the excesses of the palace had enervated him, piqued at being

thus flouted in the presence of his courtiers, seemed suddenly to become animated with the spirit of his former days. His dim eyes flashed, his pale jaded features were lighted up with a rush of blood, he grasped his sword, and, starting upon his feet, exclaimed with the energy of momentary passion, "Let them come, let them come ! Herod the Idumæan, and Antony the uncircumcised Pagan, let them make impious league together, and bring up the brazen cohorts of Rome, and plant their golden eagles before our battlements, before the walls of unsailable Jerusalem. There shall they lie, as did the Chaldæans when besieging Tyre, until their heads grow bald with wearing helmets, and their shoulders peel with carrying burthens. Our quivers shall be their open sepulchres ; our swords shall be for ever red and warm with passing through the flesh of Romans ; our spears shall bathe in gore ; our arrows shall be drunk with blood ; and the skirts of our garments

shall be crimson, like his who treadeth the winepress. *Mi camoca Baelim Jehovah?* the ravens of Palestine shall be gorged with the flesh of these Italians, our dogs shall bury their hearts in the earth because they are surfeited with eating them, and the valley of Hinnom shall be white with their bones !”

“ The blood of the valiant Asmonæans is in his veins,” cried the obsequious courtiers, not a little astonished at this martial ebullition : “ our brave King shall be as terrible to the Romans as was his ancestor, the renowned Judas Maccabeus, to the Greeks.”

Antigonus, however, who had been electrified for the moment by the glowing language of scripture and a flash of happier recollections, had by this time again sunk into listlessness, and filling a large goblet of spiced wine quaffed it off at a draught to recover himself from the transitory effort he had made. The deep potation quickly drowned every nobler and more

manly thought; he again took the casket of jewels in his hands, and, eyeing them with a doating look, said to the Sagan—"You should love these gewgaws—they have saved you half your beard; for had you not brought them back to me, after the Pagan had declined my overtures, I should have treated you as the King of the Ammonites did the ambassador of David. And your daughter, the stag-eyed and stately beauty, why did she not accompany you? Let me see her at the court, for verily I would climb to the topmost pinnacle of my palace. might I but behold her as David did Bathsheba." In this maudlin style he continued to talk for some time; his conversation betraying so manifestly the influence of the wine, and assuming such an offensive tone in his references to Zillah, that the Sagan seized the first opportunity of withdrawing, and left the royal debauchee and his kindred revellers to finish their carousal.

To Zillah the most interesting change that had occurred during their absence was the introduction of a new inmate into the Sagan's house in the person of Lilla, a beautiful girl, about her own age, but in every other respect as different as possible from herself. She was a niece of the Sagan's first wife. Her father, a merchant living upon the borders of the Red Sea and trading to India, had married a beautiful Arabian woman, by whom he had this only child, equally beloved by both parents, and yet a perpetual subject of dissension between them. The mother, adhering to the religion and habits of her native country, took advantage of her husband's compulsory absences and long journeys with the caravans in the prosecution of his commercial pursuits, to decamp from their home, carrying her child with her, and, joining the Arab tribe to which she herself had originally belonged, where she carefully instilled into her daughter all the wild notions of her

race, and made her conform as much as possible to their practices. She had no intention, however, of deserting her home altogether. When the husband returned, his wife and child soon rejoined him ; but he had always the inexpressible mortification of finding that great pains had been taken to eradicate from the mind of the latter every thing that was Hebrew, either as to faith or practice, and to substitute the doctrine and system of the Arabs. Hence there were incessant differences between the parents ; while Lilla, who loved both with an equal affection, and wished to obey the injunctions of each, grew up in an intermediate state, as to thought, habits, and demeanour ; although a shrewd observer might presently have detected that the mother's influence prevailed, and that the Arab predominated over the Jewess in her character. None, however, could for a moment doubt that the beauty of both races was united in her person ; and this circumstance,

by procuring her admirers of either country, only increased the anxiety and inflamed the quarrels of her ill-mated parents. A lover at length presented himself, who quickly obtained the heart of the daughter, and might have been thought expressly calculated to unite the suffrages of both parents. By birth, education, and faith, he was an Israelite; but some political offence, which he did not choose to divulge, having compelled him to fly from Jerusalem, he had become the captain of a band of roving freebooters, and might so far be assimilated with the predatory Arabs, whose mode of life he imitated. Lilla's mother would have gladly gratified the inclinations of her child by bestowing her upon him in marriage; but the father, not willing to have such an ambiguous and lawless character for his son-in-law, and fearing that the headstrong and impetuous Lilla would not listen to his remonstrances, caused her to be secretly conveyed to an Island in the Red Sea,

whence, after a detention of some time in the strictest concealment, she was transferred to the care of her relation the Sagan at Jerusalem. This place her father had been induced to select, not only to withdraw her from her mother, but because her lover had repeatedly declared that his life would be in immediate jeopardy were he once to pass within the walls of the Holy City, thus confessing himself to be an outlaw, though he would never reveal how he became such. From the precautions used in transferring her to Palestine it was hoped that her lover, a rover upon the face of the earth, would not discover her place of retreat; and that, if he did, his regard for his own safety would deter him from approaching her. Her father had accompanied her to Jerusalem; and the Sagan's wife, upon an explanation of the circumstances, had not only consented to receive her into the house, but had promised to keep watch over her conduct, and prevent, if

possible, her escape, which it was thought not unlikely that she might attempt.

Lilla's figure was small; but she had the perfect symmetry, and almost the light and agile elasticity of the antelope, combined with a muscular strength that seemed neither compatible with her diminutiveness nor her sex. Fleet as a greyhound, she would put her hand upon the shoulder of the tallest camel, and vault over it; strong as an Amazon, she would draw a bow which had baffled the efforts of many a stout archer. As the occasional resident of the wilderness and the desert, she had acquired much of the wildness of uncivilized life; and yet her manner would at times attest that, in her father's house at Suez, she had become familiarized with many of the observances of more polished society. Violent in her passions, impetuous, headstrong, irascible, and fierce when provoked, she was equally fervid in her attachments: to have conferred a single favour upon her was to tame, at once, all

that was wild in her disposition, and to convert her into the most gentle, grateful, and affectionate of creatures. She wore the Arab dress, a species of turban upon her head, allowing a braid of her raven hair to be seen on either side her forehead ; a richly decorated tunic, with short sleeves ; loose trowsers, gathered in at the middle of the leg ; broad silver bracelets, -studded with brass, and anklets of the same description. To complete the strangeness of her appearance, she carried a small dagger in her girdle ; while her mother had not only tinged her nails with the golden-coloured henna, but had made punctures in the flesh of her arms and legs, wherever it was exposed to view, and by rubbing different coloured powders into the incisions, had produced a rude resemblance of various flowers. It looked as if Nature, to mark Lilla for a child of her own, had stamped upon her skin some of the vegetable products of the wilderness and desert, which had always formed

her favourite haunts, and then sent her forth, in the bloom and spirit of her floral beauty, to show the superiority of primitive wildness over all the cold, tame, sophisticated daughters of civilization.

“ They tell me we are not cousins, and that we must not call one another such,” she exclaimed, on being first introduced to Zillah. “ Let us, then, be friends, which is the dearest of all relationships. I see, by your face, that I shall love you : by the first glimpse I always know whether I shall like people or hate them. Salome’s haughty looks filled me at once with aversion, and it has since been constantly increasing.”

“ Hush, hush !” said Zillah, “ she is in the adjoining chamber ; she may overhear you.”

“ What then ? it is better she should hear an unpleasant truth than that I should tell a lie. She ordered me to change my dress, and adopt that of the Hebrews. Ordered ! Re-

quest or entreaty might have won me to compliance ; but I would rather die than obey a command so imperiously given. She threatened to compel me, called me a wild Canaanite, and dared to cast reflections upon my mother. I drew my dagger, and told her, that if she breathed another syllable of reproach against her who gave me being, I would sheathe it in her heart. She termed me a young Idumæan tigress, left me, and we have rarely met since ; so that I have had little recreation at Jerusalem, except in playing tricks upon Jesse, the King's favourite, who has fallen desperately in love with me, or by amusing myself in my own chamber with the dear companion I brought with me from Arabia."

" I knew not that any such had been left with you ; I thought you were alone."

" You shall see," said Lilla, running out of the room, and re-appearing in a moment with a rude sackbut of five strings in her hands.

“ This is my play-fellow ; it has awakened echoes in the desert and the wilderness, in the camp of our horsemen, and amid our flocks and herds when they were pasturing. I love to listen to it, for its sound seems to give wings to my heart, and enable it to fly back to the scenes that it loves.” She struck it, and with an untutored though far from unmelodious voice, warbled a wild Arab song, of whose import Zillah was ignorant, although it seemed to excite the most vehement emotions in the singer. “ Have you seen much of our dear Jerusalem since your arrival ?” enquired Zillah when she had concluded her song.

“ Little beyond what I saw in entering it, nor did I wish to know more of it ; I hate all cities. What are they good for, but to breed slaves, and ensure the subjection of the country in which they are built ? Your handmaids, Rachel and Deborah, tell me that Jerusalem is threatened with a siege, a prospect which fills

its inhabitants with consternation. The moveable towns of the Arabs are exposed to no such humiliations. If an enemy approaches whom it suits us not to attack, our tents are struck, our flocks and herds are driven away, and our city, another and the same, rises up in a single night upon the banks of some distant river. Hence is it that ours is the only country which has never been conquered. The wide world is our inheritance, liberty is our portion, and we need little envy those, who call themselves more civilized, the disgraceful splendour of their marble prisons ; for such are their proudest cities."

A slight expression of reproach passed over the countenance of Zillah as she replied, " We have pleasures which you, the daughter of a true Israelite, and speaking the language of the Hebrews in the Holy City, ought never to have forgotten ; we have our religious festivals, which to us are all in all."

" So have the Arabs, in addition to their

other enjoyments. We always observe the feasts of Alelat and Alelatta, and that of the golden-footed Antelope."

" Lilla ! you shall go forth with me and see the wonders of Jerusalem, the glory of our God-hallowed temple, the monuments of our past greatness. You shall again read over with me the sacred volume, and you will then blush to talk of these unworthy idols of the Arabians. Come, shall we walk abroad ?"

" It is a restraint to me to walk. I am fettered by such sluggish motion. I would rather run, leap, vault like the wild goat. O that I had wings to fly ! I sometimes feel that I ought to have them ; and look upon my shoulders, and am ready to weep for the want of them. But if it is your pleasure to crawl along amid the walls of our common prison, I am ready to accompany you. Come, let us hasten to creep forth, that it may be the sooner over."

Zillah, who, from her long absence, felt as if

she were about to revisit a beloved friend, in again viewing the well-known streets and structures of Jerusalem, walked forth, accompanied by Lilla, into the City, gazing with renewed delight upon those lofty venerable structures with their balconies and crowning terraces, which, crumbling with age, and appearing to crush down the inferior stories, threatened to fall altogether, and threw back the mind into the remotest antiquity. The holy inscriptions upon the door-posts, the texts written over the windows, many of which were illegible from age, the sculptured records upon the walls and buildings, wherever any historical or religious incident had occurred, all contrasted strongly with the towns and edifices to which her eye had been lately accustomed, and imparted to old and familiar associations a certain air of novelty. Nor was the moving picture less characteristic and peculiar to the Holy City. Numerous priests, in all the solemnity of their robes and

long beards, were pacing in various directions. From large skins slung across the backs of asses, the water was streaming to lay the dust, preparatory to the great procession of the Feast of Lights, in memory of the purification of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus. The different sects were easily recognizable as they passed along:—the fierce and savage zealot, armed with his dagger, looking upon himself as the successor of Phinehas, who, in a transport for the honour of God, did immediate execution upon Zimri, and mistaking an outrageous and ferocious extravagance for a devout enthusiasm, even when it inflamed him to robbery and murder;—the Dashing Pharisee, so called, because he crawled along apart and in humility, the heel of one foot touching the great toe of the other, and neither foot being lifted from the ground, so that his toes were dashed against the stones;—the Bleeding Pharisee, whose legs streamed with blood from the

thorns inserted in the hem of his garment, or who shut his eyes to avoid the sight of women, and pressed so close to the walls in walking, that he wounded his feet and made them bleed ; —the Pharisee of the Mortar, who wore a deep hat of that shape, so that he could not look upward, nor on either side, but only downward and straight forward ;—the Pharisee, who cried aloud as he walked, “Let me know what my duty is, and I will do it ;” and several others of the same sect, whose peculiar absurdities and hypocritical pretensions to superior sanctity it would be tedious to enumerate. All these wore unusually broad phylacteries, whence they had acquired the not inappropriate name of bridled asses, and were mostly followed by women, mumbling prayers, and affecting an enthusiasm of devotion, under which veil they were suspected of practices diametrically opposite to their professions. The scribes and fathers of the Sanhedrim, proud of their legal learning,

turned with profound contempt from these superstitious devotees, and gathering into little knots, so that their beards sometimes touched one another as they conversed, mooted abstruse points of doctrine with an eager, sharp-eyed earnestness; the voluptuous Sadducee, the Epicurean of the Hebrews, and generally a man of rank and quality, betrayed by the jaded elegance of his appearance, that he was determined to crowd as much luxury and debauchery as possible into the life which he considered to be a final one; while the Essenes, in their white linen garments, testified by the primitive simplicity of their garb, and the unaffected humility of their demeanour, that they courted not vulgar popularity, but contented themselves with that pious doctrine, and life of rigid virtue, which rendered them the most exemplary and irreproachable of all the Hebrew sectarians.

Mingled with these, there were factious and

tumultuous bands parading the streets with arms, and proclaiming with loud cries death to the partisans of Herod, who, since his acknowledged alliance with the Romans, the common enemy of all true Israelites, had become ten times more hateful. Terrified at the menacing aspect of these rioters, reminding her, as they did, of the perils she had encountered from similar desperadoes at the time of the fire in Rome, Zillah quitted the street Maktesh, and turned into the outer court of the Temple, where she showed her companion the stones of the old altar desecrated by Antiochus, which were lying piled up in a corner, until a prophet should arise to pronounce upon their final disposal. Beside a pile of wood, intended for the new altar of burnt-offerings, was seated an ancient Levite, gathering and putting aside the decayed billets; and beyond him was an aged brother of the same order, unravelling an old garment of the high priests, to make wicks for the tapers

of the Sanctuary, it being held a desecration, that the robes, which had been consecrated to the use of the Temple, should be appropriated to any other service. Even the volatile Lilla stood still and silent as she gazed with an awe-stricken admiration at the stupendous proportions and solemn majesty of the Temple. "Alas!" said Zillah, observing her emotion, "the old men who returned from the Captivity, and recollected the glory of Solomon's Temple, mourned and wept when they saw the foundations laid of this inferior structure, stately and august as it may appear to us. This work of Zerubbabel and Joshua wants five things, which were the chief glory of the former Temple;—the Ark and its furniture—the Shechinah, or cloud of the divine presence—the holy fire—the Urim and Thummim—and the spirit of prophecy: but it is still not the less to be revered as the palace of the living God, a treasure-house of glorious and hallowed reminiscences,

a type of all that is infinite and invisible, a link that connects earth with heaven."

As she spoke, the music of the choir within suddenly struck up, the shivering echoes of the silver trumpets, reverberating from the vast concaves of the building, thrilled through the air, and the deep voices of the choristers and singing Levites chanted in loud-swelling harmony, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God!" Upon Zillah the effect of this sublime consolation, dispelling for the moment all her foreboding fears, awakening a thousand sublime associations, and proving to her that she had indeed returned to the Holy City and the true worship, was electrical. At once elevated to rapture, and penetrated with deep emotion, she stood listening to the lofty strain, until the tears burst from her eyes and poured down her cheeks. Lilla was affected at what she conceived to be the distress of her companion, while, with a sweetness of entreaty

and tenderness of feeling, that seemed scarcely compatible with her wild character, she implored her to be comforted. "I am comforted," said Zillah, "soothed, exalted, transported. Oh, what a grand and glorious symphony ! it dies away, its echoes have floated up to Heaven. Let us proceed."

They crossed the court, and going out at the north gate proceeded to the pool of Bethesda. How different was its present aspect from the scene of noise and tumult it had exhibited at the washing of the sheep. It was now the season when the angelic visitant was expected to descend and impart a healing virtue to its waters ; and the lame, blind, and diseased paupers, who usually stationed themselves at the Temple gates, were crowded around the margin ; while numerous others, the victims of every affliction and infirmity that flesh is heir to, thronged the five porches, imparting to the whole enclosure the appearance of a vast lazar-

house. The countenances of this wretched assemblage, wan and worn with sickness, or haggard with anguish, were still elevated to a certain degree above the sufferings of the flesh by an expression of devout faith and animated hope. In the midst of their pangs the mind manifestly triumphed over the infirmity of the body. Avoided by all, and cut off apparently from every human sympathy, the miserable lepers, forming a sad fellowship among themselves, were huddled together by one corner of the pool. In another quarter were the possessed of devils, foaming at the mouth, writhing their naked limbs in fierce contortions that sometimes snapped the cords wherewith they were bound, while they ranted and raved against the friends who confined them to the spot they occupied, in the hope of obtaining their cure. As Zillah and Lilla approached, either the wind, or the movement of something within the pool, occasioned a slight rippling of the waters,

when a buzz of eager anxiety ran round the margin: several whispered, "The Angel! the Angel!" a breathless silence ensued; every straining eye was riveted to the pool as if it would start from its socket; the possessed ceased their howlings, the lepers wore a faint smile upon their ghastly visages, the sorest cripple raised himself up from the earth, the palsied head became momentarily fixed, the pantings of asthma and the hoarse barkings of catarrh were arrested, the blind turned their sightless orbs towards the waters, stretching out their hands as if to feel for information; and all were for the instant transfixed in the postures and with the expressions they had severally assumed. But the pool was no longer troubled, its surface resumed its dull glassy appearance, and gradually, slowly, painfully the cadaverous assemblage sunk back into its previous position; the cough, the struggling breath, the groan, the maniacal howl were again heard; and the flash of

expectation that had lighted up every countenance was succeeded by a look of comparative disappointment, still sustained however by a patient, languid hope.

At the sight of so much human misery Zillah was affected, overcome. "Let us return home," she said to Lilla:—"hereafter we will extend our excursion, for I must show you the whole City. What I have witnessed to-day has sometimes humiliated, sometimes exalted, sometimes distressed me; but under every sensation my pleasant emotions have been ennobled, my painful ones assuaged by the great, the exhilarating, the ineffable delight of feeling that I am once more in Jerusalem."

CHAPTER V.

JESSE the King's favourite, as Lilla had herself slightly intimated to Zillah, had indeed fallen vehemently in love with her. Satiated with the common forms of Jewish beauty, in which the strongly marked national physiognomy of his countrywomen did not allow any very great diversity, his palled fancy was smitten with the novel style of Lilla's attractions, not less than with the picturesqueness of her garb, the originality of her mind, and the bold heedless vivacity of her manners, which, disregarding the conventional forms of society, set her above all restraint, and

rendered her indifferent to every local and personal consideration. This ignorance and fearlessness betrayed her into many violations of established propriety, perfectly innocent in intention, though sometimes very startling in their effect ; but to a jaded debauchee like Jesse, who required to be constantly excited, who was never so happy as when he had something new to wonder or to laugh at, these very eccentricities became a charm, and he had never found any society half so piquant and delightful as that of Lilla. He was amused, the lassitude of his ordinary feelings was suspended ; and because he no longer hated the hours for being so heavy, he imagined that he loved Lilla for being so volatile and gay. Lilla's affections being already and unalterably fixed upon the lover from whom her father had been so anxious to separate her, she would have quickly spurned the walls of Jerusalem, and eluded all the watchfulness of her guardians, had she known

where to find the object of her attachment. Neither remonstrance nor entreaty, distance nor difficulty could have deterred the self-willed girl from following the impulses of her heart. For the first time in her life she regretted the want of a settled home, not for herself, but for her lover, that she might have known where to find him. He was a rover, a wanderer upon the face of the earth ; his predatory life forbade him to remain long in one quarter, and she had only to hope that he might discover her place of concealment, and contrive to bear her away as his bride, though she was well aware that he could not pass the gates of Jerusalem without placing his life in immediate jeopardy.

Even if her affections had not been thus pre-engaged, Jesse was the last person to have won them. The only character she deemed worthy of a man, was that of a warrior. Valour, impetuosity, a fiery and adventurous spirit, these were the qualities she loved. Jesse, a perfumed

and effeminate courtier, was in every respect the reverse of what she admired; and she would have been indignant at his importunities, but that she considered him rather an object for contemptuous bantering and laughter than for serious anger. Incessant were the taunt and ridicule, innumerable the practical jokes of which her malicious pleasantry rendered him the victim. Mischievous and playful as the wild zebra, she seemed never weary of tormenting him. If he dined at the Sagan's, not content with exposing him to the guests by unsparing rail-lery, she put nauseous drugs into his wine, bitter melons upon his plate, and purposely spilt the contents of the dishes upon his costly garments, pretending that it was accidental, and excusing herself by her ignorance of the Hebrew modes of eating. She affected an extravagant admiration of his taste in dress; and when he had decorated himself with more than usual elegance for the sake of accompanying

her in a walk, she would lead him to the valley of Hinnom ; and take care that he should return completely bedaubed by the splashings of the carts that conveyed the filth of the city into that general receptacle of all abominations. Once she contrived that he should fall into the Cedron in rescuing her turban, which she had dropped into the water for that express purpose ; and manifold were the appointments she made to meet him in remote or noisome places, where he was invariably left to his own solitary meditations ; although, by the assistance of the maids, Rachel and Deborah, who began to relish this sort of persecution, she generally managed to get a peep, and enjoy a laugh at him unseen. Lilla carried her malice still farther. By persuading her weak and infatuated admirer that a certain air of piquancy and adventure would be given to his courtship if he came to visit her in disguise, which she assured him was the invariable custom among

the Arabs, he was prevailed upon to black his face with ointment, and present himself as an Ethiopian camel-driver, or an itinerant vender of frankincense and drugs, or as a wandering minstrel, although his voice was ludicrously bad ; upon all which occasions she betrayed him into some scrape from his assumed character, and more than once exposed him to the infliction of the cudgel or the bastinado. Coarse and unfeminine as were these pranks, they did not lower her in the estimation of Jesse, who considered them evidences of a brisk frolicksome petulancy, the natural playfulness of a wild Arab girl, and felt his passion accordingly rather stimulated than discouraged by his being made the butt of her exuberant spirits.

Utterly dissimilar as were Zillah and Lilla, an intimacy grew up between the two ; for the Arab would take lessons and instructions from Zillah, which she would have disdained to receive from any other ; while the latter found in

the society of her wild and vivacious friend an occasional, though only a temporary, remedy for that mental depression under which she found herself gradually sinking. In the excitement incident to her first return, in the delight of revisiting Jerusalem, and all its hallowed monuments, she had been unassailed by the attacks of melancholy ; but as the novelty of these impressions wore off, her thoughts reverted more frequently to Felix, whom she had left a prisoner at Alexandria ; who might, perhaps, at that moment be suffering some heavy and dishonouring punishment for his generous interference in her behalf ; and in spite of all her efforts to shake it off, a growing despondency clouded and darkened her mind. Nor could she discover, in whatever direction she turned her eyes, any thing to exhilarate her heart. A deep gloom hung over Jerusalem and its inhabitants, for its prospects were dark, ominous, and fearful. The public sadness extended it-

self into every private family, and there was nothing in the Sagan's to render it an exception to this pervading cheerlessness. Spacious and antique, the house itself, immured as it was within high walls, and surrounded by cloisters of black Gopher wood, was calculated to inspire solemn, if not mournful feelings, which the venerable aspect of the furniture, recalling the long succession of departed families, to whose uses it had ministered since the mansion had been first built after the return from the Captivity, did but serve to confirm and aggravate. Massive cabinets, and wardrobes of cedar and sycamore, inlaid with ivory, or mother of pearl and shells from the Red Sea, stood in almost every apartment; and the wooden pannels of the rooms were blackened by the breath of ages, which had nearly obliterated the arabesque paintings wherewith they had once been decorated. This style of ornament, which was seen in every chamber, may possibly have ori-

ginated with the Hebrews, who, imagining themselves forbidden by their law to represent any thing in heaven, earth, or water, and yet wishing to possess some sort of pictorial embellishment, may have hit upon the expedient of these grotesque combinations, thus observing the letter while they eluded the spirit of the prohibition.*

If Zillah found little to cheer her in wandering through these venerable but gloomy rooms, the solitude of her own chamber was still less calculated to dissipate the sorrows which clung about her heart, unfitting her for society, or for enjoyment of any sort. Here would she sit for hours, recalling the mysterious visits of Esau,

* Chateaubriand observed arabesque ornaments still remaining sculptured over the entrance to some ancient tombs in the vicinity of Jerusalem, as well as upon the coffins themselves; but is disposed to attribute them to the Greek chisel, and terms them "raised hieroglyphics."

the violence and wildness of his conduct in their last encounter, the inexplicable influence of the necklace, which, having twice operated as a talisman for her preservation, was now apparently no more than any other trinket; and, above all, dwelling with fond lingering recollection upon every word, every passage of her intercourse with Felix. Delightful as it was to her heart, this retrospect was invariably followed by tears of self-reproach, when she reflected that the love which she was thus unable to tear from her bosom was bestowed upon one, who, if not still a Pagan, had never formally professed his conversion to the Hebrew faith; upon one, moreover, who, even if he were an accepted proselyte of the Covenant, was now enrolled among the enemies of her country. From her confidence in the prophetic powers of Nabal, she would gladly have again had speech of him, that she might question him as to the doom of Jerusalem, as to her own fate, as to the mystic power

of the amulet she wore about her neck: but though Nabal, as she was informed, still occasionally "revisited the glimpses of the moon," haunting the caverns and the tombs in the valley, he came and went like a cloud; no one could "tell of his whereabouts," no one had discovered his abiding-place; he seemed to rise up out of the earth like a phantom, and to vanish when and where it listed him. She was obliged, therefore, to nourish her thoughts, her anxieties, her secret love, and the perpetual self-accusation it engendered, in her own bosom; a state of mind which quickly manifested its effects in waning health, and a deep though resigned melancholy.

In front of the Sagan's mansion was a large apartment, called the council-room, used, like our chapter houses, for convocations of the clergy. Latterly, while the rotunda of the Sanhedrim in the Temple was under repair, their meetings had been held in this room, upon

which occasion a circular tabernacle, or stall of cedar-wood, had been fitted up for the Nasi, or Prince of the Sanhedrim. There was something in the gloom of this chamber, and the solemn purposes to which it was applied, so consonant to the present state of Zillah's mind, that she often strolled thither to indulge her lonely meditations. One evening, while her thoughts were wandering to the prison of the citadel at Alexandria, she unconsciously placed herself in the little tabernacle we have mentioned, from the form of which, as well as from the obscurity of the apartment, she was herself skreened from observation, while she could look through the open door of the apartment, which was upon the ground floor, into the front court. Here she had not long remained, plunged in reveries, when her attention was caught by an itinerant mender of leathern bottles, who having received from the servants several to repair, was seated with the implements of his trade

near the door, apparently very busy at work, although singing at the same time the song of Judith and Holofernes. Zillah thought that the voice was familiar to her, but, as his broad Galilean dialect served in some degree to disguise it, she bestowed ~~the~~ farther attention upon the circumstance, until she observed that he gazed up at all the windows of the house with a marked attention, and, changing his strain, began to sing in some foreign language with which she was unacquainted.

At this moment Lilla came running into the council-room in search of her friend, and had no sooner caught the sound of the Arabic ballad, for such it was, than, bounding up to the meanly-clad minstrel, she threw herself into his arms, exclaiming, “ Jareb ! my beloved Jareb ! have I then found you again ? O happy, happy hour ! . Are you come to deliver me from this hateful imprisonment—to bear me

away to the wilderness? Quick, let us be gone ! let us fly instantly !”

“ Hush ! hush !” exclaimed the figure, in whom, as he turned round, Zillah instantly recognized the features of Esau, or of Jareb as he now called himself—Do you forget, wild girl, that I am here in the lion’s mouth ;—that, if I am discovered in Jerusalem, a hundred daggers will be aimed at my throat—that I shall become a corpse the very moment I am recognized ?”

“ Good heaven ! how could I be so forgetful ? Why did I pronounce your name ? Rash, rash Jareb ! you should not have ventured hither. I beseech, I implore you by Alelat and Alelatta, not to stay a moment longer—come, let us fly together !”

“ No, Lilla, I must now fly alone ; I wished first to see you, to tell you how to act, and where to remain ; but I cannot have speech

with you here ; the servants are perpetually passing—we shall be observed.”

“ Here, then, here, dear Jareb—ah ! have I again pronounced your name ? let us enter the council-room—there is no one in it—we can here converse in safety.”

As they entered the chamber and closed the door, Zillah doubted whether she ought to remain ; but when she reflected that any new surprise or outcry from the impetuous Lilla might lead to the discovery, and perhaps the death of Jareb, who was manifestly her lover, she thought it would be better, for the sake of the parties themselves, that she should become an involuntary auditress of their colloquy. Indeed there was no time for her to retreat, even had she wished it, without being seen and recognized, an occurrence which would be equally painful to herself, and to the self-styled Esau.

“ Why cannot we fly now, this very in-

stant ?" said the impatient Lilla, as soon as she had closed the door.

"Because I am Jareb the Revenger: because I have sworn by Corban and by the Temple to have my revenge upon Antigonus, and never to rest or know joy till I have seen him hurled from the throne that he has usurped. That hour is now rapidly approaching; and when his doom is sealed, then, then dearest Lilla, will I hasten to claim the hand of my affianced wife."

"God speed the day ! But how did you discover that they had concealed me here ?"

"I have not time to tell you now : suffice it that I have at last tracked you hither, after my long and painful search. I feared that you might be attempting to escape from Jerusalem, perhaps to wander forth by yourself, and be exposed to all the perils of warfare, for the whole country will be quickly up in arms. It is the purport of my visit, to warn you against

any such desperate measure. Jerusalem will shortly be besieged by Herod and a Roman army, but they have numerous confederates within the walls, by whose assistance they expect that the city will be surrendered at the first summons; and even should it prove otherwise, you can be no where better bestowed than in this house, which is strong enough to protect its inmates against popular tumult, while, from its sheltered situation, it has little to apprehend from the assaults of the besiegers. Here you will be safe, and at the proper hour I shall know where to find, and to release you."

"Here then will I await your coming, as patiently as I may; but tarry not now, dearest Jareb! See how I tremble, lest you should be discovered! It is enough that I understand your intention. I will tear myself away from you, while we are yet safe—Farewell! farewell! lose not a moment, if you love me, in flying

from this death-fraught city." They exchanged a hasty embrace, pronounced a mutual blessing, Lilla opened the door, tripped rapidly across the front court, and returned into the house, by the side gate, under the cloisters.

Ere her lover had time to quit the apartment, Salome, entering from the house, was walking rapidly across it, when she caught a glimpse of the intruder. "How now! saucy fellow!" she angrily exclaimed; "what make you here? Is our council-chamber to be made the haunt of tramping bottle-menders? Begone quickly, or I will call—El—Elohim! what do I see? It is, it is, my own, my long-absent, my beloved Ephraim!"—and running up to him, she kissed and embraced him with every appearance of deep tenderness. "Rash, adventurous, desperate man!" she continued; "what brings you to Jerusalem, where, if you had a hundred lives, you could scarcely expect to save one of them? Am I not plotting for

you night and day, not only to glut your vengeance upon the degraded Antigonus, but to secure your aggrandisement, your glory, so that the names of Salome and Ephraim may for ever be renowned in the annals of Jerusalem ? If you love me, leave all to me, and expose not your life to such frightful peril as this. Hist ! hist ! I hear footsteps approaching. If we are seen conversing, you are a dead man. Fly ! dearest Ephraim ! fly !”

Waving her hand repeatedly, as if it were to bid him farewell, and to urge him away, Salome stole back on tiptoe into the house ; the supposititious bottle-mender, gathering up his implements, walked leisurely across the court-yard, and passed out into the street ; when Zillah, seeing the coast clear, quitted the tabernacle in which she had accidentally ensconced herself, and retreated to her own chamber, utterly bewildered and amazed at what she had seen and heard.

; CHAPTER VI.

IN this unexpected occurrence Zillah found abundant materials for speculation and conjecture, although her perplexed thoughts were still unable to develope the mystery that attached itself to Esau. One fact at least was revealed by the colloquy of which she had been an involuntary auditress—he was the lover of Lilla, whom he had addressed as his affianced wife ; but as to the nature of his connection with Salome, who seemed to be as tenderly attached to him as Lilla ; as to the undivulged crime which rendered his presence in Jerusalem a deadly and desperate peril, or his reasons for assum-

ing such a variety of names, for Salome had called him her beloved Ephraim ; upon all these points she was as much in the dark as ever. She recalled the clandestine interview of which she had been a witness before her departure from Jerusalem, when he had stolen covertly from Salome's chamber ; she compared his early confession that he had been concerned in deeds of violence and blood, with his assumption of the name of Jareb the Revenger, and his recent avowal, that he preferred the gratification of his vengeance even to that of his love ; and though she felt little surprise that so wild a girl as Lilla should attach herself to one who appeared to be little better than a proscribed bandit and a vindictive outlaw, it did appear to her most marvellous that he should have been enabled to excite so paramount an interest in the bosom of the cold and supercilious Salome. From the frank and open-hearted Lilla she might have probably obtained explanations had

she chosen to ask them, but this she could not do without betraying that she had been present at the interview of the lovers, a confession from which delicacy withheld her. Even had not the same motives for silence applied to her imperious step-mother, she knew her too well to imagine that she would submit to interrogatories of any sort: so that all Zillah's secret surmises only recoiled upon her own unsatisfied mind, and she was obliged finally to resign herself to the hope that time would ultimately clear up the mysteries by which she was at present surrounded.

Her depression of spirits, and her self-reproaches upon account of Felix, whose memory still clung to her heart, remained unabated; while to add to her vexations, she was tormented by the importunities of the hateful Tubal, sometimes fawning, sometimes darkly threatening, always equally detestable in her eyes, and yet not to be repelled by scornful re-

jection, or by the most earnest entreaties that he would cease a persecution not less painful than useless. Upon this subject, Salome began to renew her angry reproaches, taxing her with a perverse and unfilial obstinacy in thus refusing a suitor who had now attained such power in the state, that he held the fate of her whole family in his hand. Under such complicated annoyances, aggravated by her declining health, Zillah passed a cheerless and melancholy existence ; but as time rolled on, a mightier, a more intense, an all-absorbing interest soon swallowed up the petty considerations of individual vexation and family feud. Private pursuits and projects, however passionately they might have been followed, were merged in the overwhelming consideration of that approaching crisis in the public fate which might speedily put at hazard the fortune, fame, and life of every dweller in Jerusalem. From all quarters at once came up the rumour of the approaching war, swelling

and growing louder and louder, until at last the voices of the multitudes thronging into the city for protection, became as the roar of a newly burst torrent, telling of the greater and more destructive inundation that is to follow it. As usual in such cases, Herod's force was magnified by fear or disaffection, while the more staunch adherents of Antigonus endeavoured to reduce it as much below its just level; but the fact that he had a Roman army with him could be denied by none, nor did any one attempt to exaggerate or to undervalue its strength. These were felt by all to be secondary considerations, for when Rome, imperial Rome committed herself to a war, however remote and insignificant in its origin, the question of her ultimate invincibility, of which she was determined to impress the conviction upon the whole world, was at stake; and upon that issue it was well known that she would desperately place the last talent in her treasury, the last cohort in her service.

Armies might be defeated, annihilated as that of Crassus had lately been by the Parthians ; but Rome remained unsubdued, and larger armies, or more successful commanders, avenging the disgraces of their predecessors, eventually crushed every enemy. Fate had apparently decreed, that Rome should be the mistress of the world, and to oppose her triumphant progress seemed to partake of the awfulness, almost of the impiety of entering the lists with the irresistible Power of destiny.

Even had they felt this conviction in their hearts, the fierce and fearless Jews, whose patriotic spirit was not less indomitable than that of the Romans, would never have shrunk from the contest, had the whole embattled world come up against them. They had no occasion, however, to borrow courage from despair. Though all the Pagans of the earth might be delivered over as slaves to these idolaters of Rome, the Hebrews, God's chosen people, the depositaries of

his law, and the sole preservers of the true worship, would never be subjected to such an indignity. The Lord of Hosts would defend his own Holy City, would become the guardian of the hallowed Temple in which he had once visibly resided; and what could human armies, what could even the invincible legions of Rome, accomplish against Omnipotence? Had not an angel from Heaven smitten one hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib's army, filling the Valley of Tophet with dead bodies, and delivering Jerusalem in a single night from the mighty host of her besiegers? These and numerous other instances of divine interference in behalf of the chosen people were now eagerly recalled; past mercies inspired them with a confidence in future protection; and the superiority of the Romans in numbers, resources and military science, however formidable it might be, could not discourage a valorous nation, not only animated by the combined fervour of patriotism

and religion, but possessing the paramount and inappreciable advantage of having the Holy City for their camp, and God for their champion.

Confidence, therefore, and even a greater degree of unanimity were inspired by the very extremity of the danger. Had Herod invested the place with none but his own adherents, it is possible that his numerous confederates within the walls, not feeling their national pride injured by surrendering the city to their own countrymen, might have given it up at once. Indeed, a plot for this purpose, in which Salome was concerned, had been for some time carried on ; but Herod's alliance with the common enemy, the idolatrous and universally hated Romans, had so inflamed the mass of the people, that they would have torn in pieces any one who should have whispered a thought of surrender. Give up the Holy City to Pagans ! It was not only to degrade and enslave themselves, but

to forswear their religion, to abandon their God ; and with such an alternative before him, who would not rather die gloriously in defending Jerusalem, than live in bonds, disgrace, and misery, to witness her subjection ?

If ever a people might imagine themselves to be identified with the cause of Heaven ; to be, in fact, the instruments and the troops of the Deity himself, when they were fighting against the rest of the world, it was the Jews. Unnumbered portents, prodigies, miracles, and deliverances, had so stamped and burnt in this impression upon their souls, that their inflammable natures were quickly kindled into an enthusiasm which gave a superhuman energy to their efforts and their valour. Sometimes, indeed, it degenerated into a fierce fanatical fervour, manifesting itself in acts of violence and cruelty ; but at others it became exalted into a sublime religious phrensy, lifting them almost above humanity, and enabling them to perform

achievements apparently so impossible to be accomplished, that they might well be excused in attributing them to divine interference. With a people so zealous, belief was performance, and they often secured a victory by their mere confidence of obtaining it. Of both these characteristic states of excitement, Jerusalem, in its present circumstances, afforded numerous examples. The lower orders, whose blind zeal only pushed them to instant outrage, providing themselves with a Maccabee banner, paraded tumultuously through the city, making its streets and courts resound with emphatical outcries of "The Temple of the Lord ! The Temple of the Lord !" and having first pulled down the Prætorium, the former residence of the Roman Governor, swearing with curses and loud cries that the Holy City should never again submit to such an indignity, they proceeded to the abodes of Herod's supposed adherents, several of whom they massacred, after having plundered and de-

molished their dwellings. Scarcely a day passed without excesses of this nature, or some desperate collision between the different factions and sects into which the population was divided ; but notwithstanding this disturbed state of the City, maidens and matrons of all ranks, girt with sackcloth beneath their breasts, and their dishevelled hair scattered upon their shoulders, ventured forth to the holy places, to the tombs of the prophets, to the Maccabee columns upon Mount Sion, but, above all, to the Temple ; where, throwing themselves upon the ground, they wept, and beat their bosoms, and appealed to Heaven with all the eloquence and energy of passion, imploring that the idolaters who came up against the Holy City, the beauty of God's ornament set in majesty, might be smitten and confounded, so that joy might not be taken from Jacob, nor the holy pipe and harp cease within the walls of Solyma. Old men, clad in sackcloth, and strewing the dust upon their heads, prostrated themselves in

every direction ; the courts of the Temple were thickly covered with supplicants, some clasping the altar or the columns of the building as if they were beloved objects about to be shortly torn from their embraces ; others upturning their venerable faces and stretching their hands towards the sky, while their grizzled beards waved in the wind, as with groans, tears, and cries, they besought God to vindicate the honour of his own Temple, to assert the supremacy of his chosen people, to stretch forth his red right hand, and to smite the idolaters of Rome, even as he had scattered the accursed host of the Assyrian monarch.

Several enthusiasts, wrought up by the excitement of the moment into a persuasion that they were inspired with the spirit of prophecy, seized a harp, and exclaiming, “ Thus saith the Lord,” roamed through the city, pouring forth rhapsodical denunciations of woe, or assurances of triumph. The Seers, the wizards,

and the monthly prognosticators were abroad and busy; nor were there wanting manifold divine presages of victory, if faith were to be given to the assurances of these men, and of numerous others, whose senses, however, it is not impossible, may have been deluded by the fervour and fermentation of their minds. More than once in the deep silence of night had they heard a trumpet sending forth a dread blast from the innermost sanctuary of the Temple. The terrible figure on the spectral horse which had assaulted Heliodorus when he would have plundered the sacred Treasury, had again been seen, the steed curveting over the marble floor with noiseless feet, and his ghostly rider brandishing a spear, while his harness of gold flashed radiance on the walls, as he passed silently along. In the evening skies too, as in the olden times when Antiochus was coming up to take and destroy Jewry, troops of horsemen were seen in array, encountering and running one against

another, with shaking of shields and multitude of pikes, and drawing of swords, and casting of darts, and glittering of golden ornaments, and harness of all sorts. And some beheld an angel of the Lord hovering over Jerusalem upon wings of purple and silver, playing on a harp ; and midnight sounds came up out of the earth, the tramping of hosts and horses, the shrill scream of clarions, the shouts of victory, and the groans of the wounded.

But however great might be the confidence of the Hebrews in the assurances of divine succour, they did not neglect any species of warlike preparation which might justify success without it. Arms and bucklers were hung upon the tops of the towers and castles, and upon the front of the Temple, as if to fling a conspicuous defiance to the enemy. The fortifications were repaired and strictly guarded : the young men and citizens were enrolled and exercised, and incorporated with the remains

of the regular army. Helmets and cuirasses gleamed in every street, and amid the prostrate supplicants who were in all quarters addressing their passionate prayers to Heaven, were to be seen fiery young warriors or stern veterans, sharpening their swords, pointing their javelins and spears, arranging their slings, furbishing their armour, or preparing their bows and arrows ; while ever and anon the splendid body guard of Antigonus, the only horsemen in the place, paraded the streets, the bells jingling at the ears of their chargers, the great banner of the Asmonæans floating above their heads, a procession of priests before them blowing the silver trumpets, the foot soldiers who followed clashing their arms upon their bucklers, while the troops and the whole people made the air resound with exulting shouts of “ Micamoca Baelim Jehovah ! ” the war-cry of the Maccabees.

Amid rumoured portents from heaven and

earth, amid scenes and spectacles such as we have been describing, appealing with equal force to the piety and the patriotism of a Hebrew, at once melting the heart and kindling the soul, who could resist the contagious excitement of the Holy City; who could avoid being transported with religious rapture? Not Zillah! Sedate and placid as she ever appeared, there was a pious enthusiasm in the recesses of her bosom, which, like the latent heat of the atmosphere only required external pressure to elicit it. In the present collision the spark was kindled, and it soon flamed up with a steady blaze, as if it had found an appropriate altar. Perhaps her heart, already bruised by sorrow, was the better fitted to breathe forth this odour of sanctity, as the crushed flower throws up a quicker incense to the sky. Whatever might have given the impulse, she abandoned herself to the fervour of her excitement with the greater vehemency, because it withdrew her

from the contemplation of her own sorrows, by devoting her whole soul to the cause of her God and of her country. This enthusiasm soon became her only solace and delight ; every day added to its solemn exaltation, for she cherished it by associations that could not fail to heighten its intensity. Visiting the tombs of the prophets, she would pass hours within their gloomy vaults, inflaming the growing fervency of her mind by solitary meditations upon the past glories and the present peril of Jerusalem, or in recalling the numerous interpositions of God, whereby she had been rescued from her threatened doom. Sometimes she would wander to the cavern of Jeremiah to ponder upon his prophecies and his denunciations ; or seating herself upon the grave of Isaiah, in the shade of the ruinous tower of Siloam, she would remain plunged in holy reveries, until she almost imagined that the vision revealed to the buried prophet beneath her was about to be offered to her own

eyes, and she would look up to the sky, half expecting to see the flying Seraph that came to touch his lips with a live coal from the altar. The holy raptures and devout abstraction of the day influenced her dreams at night, which presenting celestial apparitions to confirm the secret suggestions of her over-excited mind, again operated upon her waking thoughts ; until by the mutual re-action of spiritual enthusiasm, producing phantasms of sleep, which were accepted as revelations from heaven, Zillah began to believe that she was to be raised up as an instrument for the deliverance of Jerusalem. Other females had been chosen to this high and holy office. Deborah, a prophetess and judge of Israel, had enabled Barak to destroy the great host of the Canaanites. Huldah, another prophetess, had been consulted by King Josiah ; Esther had been appointed to preserve the Jews from a general massacre ; and although her own gentler feelings would

never allow her to rival the exploits of such stern-hearted women as Jael and Judith, she could not forget that in the month Cisleu an annual feast was celebrated in honour of another and a later Judith, the patriotic sister of Judas Maccabeus, who had been chosen to punish the impious Nicanor, after he had stretched out his right hand against the Temple of the Lord, and vowed its destruction. How she was to be made ministrant to the great purpose of serving the cause of Jerusalem, and vindicating the honour of God and the true religion, she knew not ; this she believed would be revealed to her, and whether the divine afflatus was to descend once more and imbue her with the lost gift of prophecy, or she was merely to encourage the troops by singing to them divine songs and hymns of battle, she held herself ready for the performance of her glorious task, and felt elevated, enraptured by the high and solemn hope of performing it.

The Sagan was not displeased at beholding this enthusiasm in his child ; he knew it to be genuine, he believed that it might be made conducive to the interest of the Holy City, and he observed with satisfaction that her health improved, and her melancholy disappeared as she devoted herself to this heavenly call, for such she fully considered it. He encouraged her, therefore, to take her Psalter and sing sacred Pæans to the troops at their morning and evening muster, which she did with such holy fervour, with such appearance of immediate inspiration, that the soldiers, believing her to be commissioned by the Lord for some signal purpose, became animated with zealous courage at the sound of her voice, and would sometimes call for her with loud cries, if she happened not to have arrived when they were about to begin their martial exercises.

In this office she had soon a coadjutor in the person of Micah, a young and singularly hand-

some Galilæan Levite, who though he was little better than a peasant, had been smitten with a sudden enthusiasm upon learning the danger of Jerusalem, and seizing his harp, had hastened to throw himself within its walls, in the firm resolution of not surviving its capture by the Pagans, should it be doomed to that calamity. The fire of patriotic religion seemed to be burning in his very bones; he struck his harp with a poetic phrensy, and the most maddening war songs burst extemporaneously from his lips, as if his whole soul were a blaze of inspiration. The soldiers were not less delighted with him than with Zillah. His fair and somewhat reddish hair and beard, his light hazel eyes sparkling with pious fervour, his animated looks, his melodious voice, his harp, his impassioned songs, imparted an almost seraphic character to his figure. From his personal comeliness and his pastoral life, the troops compared him to David, who was tending sheep

when Samuel sent for him to be anointed king. "Micah was holding the plough," cried some, "when he learned that Jerusalem was in peril, even as Saul was driving oxen when he heard of the danger of Jabesh-Gilead."—"The lark springs from amid the corn," said others, "but no bird soars so near to heaven, and none sings so sweetly." The names of Zillah and Micah were for ever united in the mouths of the soldiery, and the joint influence of their pious fervour, and of their melodious voices alternately chanting war songs and hymns, inflamed their courage almost to phrensy.

It was soon to be put to the test. Day after day did fugitives and scouts announce the continued though slow advance of the enemy, and from sunrise to dusk were eager and anxious crowds collected on the walls of the city, on the terraces and galleries of the Temple, on Mount Sion and every elevated point, straining their eyes to catch the first glimpse of their

appearance. A cloud of dust upon the summit of a distant hill, streaked with flashes of light as spear or cuirass caught the partial sunbeams, at length announced the long expected host, at sight of which the priests, as had been preconcerted, blew a solemn broken quivering alarum upon the trumpets, when many of the timid or disaffected Jews rent their clothes, and made great lamentations, and cast ashes upon their heads and fell down flat upon their faces, and cried aloud towards heaven. Others, however, moved to sudden rage by the spirit-stirring blasts of the trumpets and the view of the hostile force, clashed their arms upon their bucklers, and ran wildly about the city with loud menaces and execrations, vowing vengeance and extermination against the idolatrous assailants of God's holy sanctuary, while they snatched up handfuls of sand, and scattered them in the air, to intimate that they would reduce all their enemies to dust. But the mass

of the people seemed to be transfixed to the places they occupied, watching with an intense interest the advance of the host. It wound down the remote hill, now continuously gleaming and now shrouded in dust, like a distant waterfall occasionally hidden by its own spray and mist; but all was too indistinct to ascertain of what the living stream was composed. By the great length of time, however, consumed in the descent, it was inferred that the invading host was numerous and mighty, and many were the conjectures and guesses of the people as to its probable amount.

At last the whole armament disappeared in the intervening valley, the dust subsided, not an enemy was to be seen in any direction, it might have been imagined that the Holy City was reposing in perfect peace and security. The suspense that followed became gradually wound up to a pitch almost too exquisite for endurance. In their combined impatience and

anxiety the people expected the enemy to appear almost immediately upon the second ridge of hills, forgetting that it required a considerable time to cross the wide valley and again mount the heights. "They have encamped," cried some who were tired of waiting for their appearance; "they are afraid to come up against the bulwark of the heavenly King."—"The Lord has smitten them," cried others, "even as he did the mighty host of Pharaoh, and the terrible array of Sennacherib. The earth hath swallowed them up, as it did the companies of Korah, Dathan and Abiram."

This overweening delusion was not of long continuance. From the summit of the second hill a dust began to ascend, reddened by the rays of the sun, till it looked like the smoke of a great fire, and presently successive squadrons, now plainly to be recognized as cavalry, formed upon the height. In the centre of each mass might be distinguished the ensign, floating from

a tall staff; their polished brass corselets and helmets invested each phalanx with a yellow lurid light; individual horsemen could be perceived in front of the main body, and some of the Jews even pretended that they could hear the sound of their trumpets, borne faintly and at intervals upon the wind. After a short delay this advanced guard again began to descend, when other troops, both horse and foot, interspersed with elephants and camels, and various beasts of burthen, appeared upon the crown of the hill, and followed them in slow uninterrupted order into the valley, until the whole array became a second time invisible. From the direction they were taking, it was manifest that their next appearance would be in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives,—a position not precluded by the weapons of ancient warfare, although it was at so moderate a distance from the city, that the whole array might be distinctly defined, and almost numbered from

the walls. From their knowledge of this circumstance, the impatience of the people was of course increased, so that all the galleries of the Temple, each platform of the wall, every battlement of Ophel, and all the loftier buildings on the eastern side of Jerusalem, were alive with thick clustering crowds, all bending their eyes towards the opposite heights.

After a delay which, from the anxiety of the spectators, seemed to be ten times greater than it really was, the heads of the Roman columns, both horse and foot, at length exhibited themselves upon the crest of the long eminence, marching steadily forwards in close order. In their appearance there was little of the splendour and glory that had been anticipated ; for in their long previous march, and their progress through the last sandy valley, their armour and crimson garments, and the golden eagles hovering over every cohort, had become dim with dust ; but there was something terrible, even to

awfulness, in the compact array of these stern and soiled warriors, marching forward in silence, and in such admirable order, that the whole mass seemed to be informed by one single mind, and to constitute a moving rampart of iron and brass. They betrayed not the smallest emotion at the sight of Jerusalem ; though the inhabitants of the city, as they gazed at them from the walls, beheld, with an astonishment, which many of them expressed aloud, the prodigious weight that every Roman soldier was obliged to carry, his arms, armour, and accoutrements being of the most ponderous description, and much more numerous than those of the Hebrews ; while all were laden, over and above, with provisions for several days. The command to halt was given by the trumpet ; two or three trifling evolutions were performed by the same signal, which seemed to answer all the purposes of the human voice ; and the squadrons

then stood immovable, extended upon the height like a solid metallic wall.

Far different was the approach of Herod's forces, with the Syrian and other auxiliaries who had charge of the baggage and battering train of the whole armament. Wild and fierce bands of every hue, from the Ethiopian, whose black skin was rendered more conspicuous by his white turban and garments, to the fair-haired barbarian of the North,—some half-armed, others in coats of mail, or cased in scales and plate, with plumes tossing in the wind,—pressed forward in glittering but disorderly pomp, flapping their banners to and fro, brandishing their arms, filling the air with wild music and the clash of cymbals, leaping and stamping upon the earth with savage exultation at finding themselves so close to Jerusalem, and making the welkin ring with barbaric shouts and cries. Next came enormous elephants, heaving them-

selves slowly up out of the valley, and looking, as they gained the ridge, like dark clouds rising from the sea. Some drew ponderous vehicles laden with catapults and battering-rams, and stupendous engines of all sorts ; while others had turrets on their back, filled with armed men. To these succeeded an almost interminable procession of camels and dromedaries, mules and oxen, waggons and artillery, as if the four quarters of the earth had been put in requisition to furnish men, animals, and ammunition for the assault of the Holy City.

From the multitudes that covered the towers and ramparts of Jerusalem, there went up, indeed, a fierce shout, a mighty roar, in answer to the cries of defiance that proceeded from Herod's motley armament ; but the heart of many a stout Hebrew sank within him when he contemplated the silent, stern, close columns of the Romans, bristling with iron and brass, and consisting of warriors whose souls were

known to be cased in armour still more stubborn and adamantine than that which enveloped their bodies. Notwithstanding the present exaltation of her mind, Zillah, who had beheld the whole spectacle from one of the Temple galleries, sickened at the thought of the frightful contest that must ensue between a power like that of Rome, and a people so fierce and desperate as the Jews, when assaulted in the Holy City, and fighting for the Temple of the Lord. The evening was now approaching, and she went to seek her father, that she might relate to him what she had seen. “ I want not to hear of their array,” said the Sagan ; “ we depend not upon an arm of flesh for our defence ; why, therefore, should we be intimidated by the multitude of the host that is come up against us ? The same watchful and beneficent Power which, when the heavy snows are sent from heaven, draws up the boughs of the cedar into a cone, that they may not snap with

the weight, will, in like manner, so raise up and fortify our hearts, in this our time of peril, that they shall not break with the burthen imposed upon them. Hands uplifted in prayer are better than hands armed with javelins, for the dispersion of our enemies. Let us to the chapel." He accompanied Zillah to a private oratory in the house, where he put up fervent supplications for the deliverance of Jerusalem ; at the conclusion of which he exclaimed, " Now do I feel easier and more assured in my heart. Cheer me still farther, my child, with your pleasant voice. Take your psalter, and chant to me some song that may recall the deliverance of our people, when it has been in still more imminent jeopardy than now."

" Shall it be the song of the Israelites delivered from the Egyptians ?" enquired Zillah.

" Even that, my child. You have composed

it from our traditions, rather than from Holy Writ; but it is applicable to our present peril, when the Roman host is scarcely less formidable than that of Pharaoh. May its destruction be as signal! Amen!"

Zillah repeated the Amen, took her psaltery, and immediately began to sing.—

I.

The shuddering Sea heard the voice of its God,
Convulsed and aghast in its innermost deep,
And where Moses outstretch'd his miraculous rod,
It parted—its waves with precipitous sweep,
Upheaving and rolling, and climbing on high,
Till the sun-startled sands of the bottom were dry.

II.

Far, far are those billowy ramparts descried;
Their foam-crested summits still quiver with fear;
And as sunlight illumines each crystalline side,
The menacing monsters of ocean appear,—
From those watery walls, with vain gnashing of teeth
They glare on the host as it passes beneath.

III.

The Behemoth opens his cavernous jaw,
His red nostrils smoke, he is rearing to leap ;
The scaly Leviathan lifts up his paw,
While his fire-flashing eyeballs emblazon the deep ;
And the bristling Sea-dragon, in impotent wrath,
With his tail churns the shivering sea into froth.

IV.

With eyes half-averted, and hearts beating high,
In silence the Israelites quicken their pace ;
And mark where beneath them confusedly lie
The bones of an antediluvian race,
And fragments of wrecks, which in darkness had slept
Since o'er them the Flood's whelming hurricane swept !

V.

Every danger is past—on the opposite coast,
Uninjured, the God-guided multitude stands ;
And lo ! where the shouting Egyptian host
Down rushes in fierce and dark-clustering bands :
Their arms on their loud-ringing bucklers they dash
To the trumpet's hoarse bray and the cymbal's loud
clash.

VI.

See ! Pharaoh starts up in his chariot of gold ;
His crown and his faulchion flash bright in the sun ;
He urges a quicker pursuit, and behold !
The midst of that perilous passage is won :
But lo ! the Lord looks through the pillar of cloud ;
Astounded—aghast stands the paralysed crowd !

VII.

Moses stretches his hand,—’tis the signal of doom ;
Restored is the might of each watery mound ;
In thundering masses down, down do they boom,
And a mountainous chaos of foam boils around :
The war-horses snort, and leap madly on high,
While bursts from the host one dread agonized cry.

VIII.

The Dragon, Leviathan, Behemoth dash
Amidst them with rampant and ravenous joy ;
The bones of the captains and horsemen they crash,
And league with the waters to whelm and destroy,
Till the judgment’s fulfilled, and the havoc is done,
And the victims have perished, yea every one,
And the death-glutted monsters and waves sink to sleep,
And a silence sepulchral hangs over the deep !

CHORUS.

Hark ! hark ! to the timbrel's sound !

'Tis Miriam, the prophetess !—High she flings
Her arms, and with rapturous triumph sings

The hymn of rejoicing victory !

While the Hebrew maidens round and round,

Wildly exulting, dance and bound ;

And the host sends the choral strain on high,

Till the echoes ring from the vaulted sky.

Hallelu-Jah ! —Hallelu-Jah !

Jehovah Tsebaioth ! Hallelu-Jah !

The Sagan had listened to the sacred chaunt, swaying backwards and forwards, as was his wont, with a complacent delight ; but, at its conclusion, he started from his chair with sudden animation, and, throwing up his hands and eyes to Heaven, shouted out the final chorus in a loud and vehement voice, as if appealing to the God of Hosts that he might miraculously destroy the Romans even as he had annihilated the great host of the Egyptians.

CHAPTER VII.

ON the night when the Sagan and his daughter were thus occupied in hymns and devout supplications, Salome was far differently employed. It has been intimated that she had been concerned in a plot for surrendering the city, but that the presence of the Romans, and the consequent exasperation of the people, had rendered such a scheme imminently dangerous, if not impracticable. No perils, however, could appal the daring and ambitious Salome. One of the high towers upon the wall being commanded by a confederate in the conspiracy, they were provided with a secure place of coun-

cil, whence they could easily communicate with the besiegers, or let themselves down and make their escape should their treason be discovered by Antigonus. All access to this tower was of course denied, except to the conspirators and their adherents, of whom one of the most active and influential was Barjona, surnamed the grasshopper from his supposed likeness to that insect. He was a dry, shrunk, shrivelled, craggy old man ; his back-bone sticking out, his knees projecting forwards, his arms backwards ; the joints of his bones were all enlarged, and his right arm was paralytic ; but never was there such an instance of the triumph of the mind over the body. His spirit seemed absolutely to defy its material tegument,—to despise the unkindness of Nature,—to repel the assaults of age. His flashing black eye had lost none of its fierceness ; while the eloquence for which he had always been celebrated, retained the fire, vigour, and venom of his first youth. Bold and

intriguing, this spiritual demagogue, who practised at the same time all the ascetical mortifications of the Pharisees, had obtained such an influence over the multitude by the power of appealing to their passions and their superstition, that he had rendered himself formidable to all the other factious leaders, and was considered by Salome an important personage to be enrolled among the conspirators, of whom she herself aspired to be the chief directress. Neither to this man, nor to his worthy colleague Tubal, had she hitherto unfolded the full extent of her ambitious views; but the time was now come when she found it necessary to develope them. Both these parties well knew that Ephraim, with whom the reader has already become acquainted under the additional names of Esau and Jareb the Revenger, was the only son of Salome by her first husband; that he had been exiled from Jerusalem, and was a proclaimed outlaw, upon whose head a large price had been

set by Antigonus ; but they were not aware that his mother had been in frequent communication with him, and that the various intrigues and plots in which she had been perpetually intermeddling had not only been prompted by her personal ambition, but stimulated by her affection for her proscribed son. She now revealed to Barjona the whole extent of her project, which was, to surrender the city to the Romans, upon condition that they would make her son King of Judæa, appoint her husband High Priest, and confer upon the other conspirators the principal offices of the State. “ Herod’s alliance with the Idolaters,” she exclaimed, “ has caused his name to be execrated throughout Jerusalem ; and, besides, he is no true Israelite, for his mother was an Idumæan. Neither of these objections apply to my son, who was always the darling of the troops and the people ; he is collaterally a Maccabee ; he is of untainted Hebrew blood, while by his

valorous and martial character he is a thousand times better fitted to be a King of the Jews than this effeminate and cowardly Antigonus, the slave of sloth, women, and wine."

"But what will be said to this by the Romans, who have made treaty with Herod, and proclaimed him King?"

"They care not for him more than for Ephraim; their sole object is money. If we flatter their pride by acknowledging their supremacy, and agreeing to pay them tribute as before, they will be glad to be spared the toil, expense, and slaughter of a long siege."

"You forget that, in their present state of exasperation, our own people will never consent to receive the Romans into the town."

"They need not be exposed to this humiliation. They have but to give up Antigonus; to declare that they choose Ephraim for their King, and the Sagan for their High Priest; that they are willing to pay future tribute, perhaps to re-

munerate the Romans for the expenses already incurred, and there cannot be a doubt that the conditions will be accepted, and that their army will gladly retire from before our walls."

"And if our projects fail, have you well weighed the consequences to ourselves and to Ephraim?"

"What have we to fear for ourselves, so long as we retain this tower, in which we may defy the rage of Antigonus, and escape when it lists us to the Romans. As to Ephraim, had I seven sons like the immortal mother of the Maccabees, whose name I bear, and, like her, had I suckled each of them three years, I would peril them all in this glorious cause; ay, and perish with the last of them were it necessary. I act not in this for myself, and my son only, but for my country. Judæa wants a hero, an Ephraim—not a craven like Antigonus, whose scabbard is the grave of his

sword, where it may be eaten by the worms of rust ere he would flash it in the face of an enemy. He is at once hated and despised by all true Israelites."

"Perhaps so ; but yet they may not be ready for deposing him, and for anointing Ephraim."

"That question will shortly be put to the test ; and it is for this purpose I have now sent for you. The fate of Jerusalem, at the present moment, is not in its King, nor its Sanhedrim, nor its grandees, nor even in its troops ; but in the Pharisees, enthusiasts, and fanatical demagogues, together with the prophets, wizards, and prognosticators of the lower orders, who may influence the superstitious populace and the army to whatever measure they please. Tubal has gone to collect the chief of these people in the Sepulchre of Adoniram. Your familiarity with all these star-gazers and enthusiasts,—your reputation for superior sanctity,—your boldness, spirit, and unrivalled eloquence, will enable you,

better than any other, to sway them to our purpose; and it is therefore my earnest request, that you will accompany me to the Sepulchre, and, by appealing to their passions, instigate them to rise up in general rebellion against Antigonus, and proclaim Ephraim for their King."

Barjona pointed out the perilous nature of this commission, involving no less than his life if they failed in their enterprise, and demanded the nature of his reward if they succeeded. Salome again adverted to the personal safety secured to all parties by the possession of the tower, in which they were at that moment conversing; and mentioned, as his recompence, one of the first dignities in the State, which had long been the object of his secret ambition. Barjona consented to the proposition; their compact was ratified by oaths on both sides; and, as it was now dark, the parties set out together for the place of meeting.

The Sepulchre of Adoniram was a spacious

excavation of the rock in the Vale of Gihon, just where it joined the western angle of Gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom, and consequently on the opposite side of the city to that which was invested by the Roman army. From its great extent, having been originally a quarry, it had been chosen as an honourable burial-place for Adoniram,—a priest of some consequence, who had expired, about fifty years before, in the odour of sanctity, his friends claiming for him the honour of being a prophet, though his title to inspiration was by no means recognized by others. Here, at all events, they had not only built him a handsome tomb, but his family, out of respect to his memory, kept a large lamp continually burning in the sepulchre; while they had suspended over his grave, by a chain from the roof, the identical harp which he had used in his life, religiously repairing and renewing its strings as often as the lapse of time rendered it necessary. Towards this place of rendezvous,

which had been selected to afford the greater chance of concealment in their proceedings, Salome and Barjona proceeded, bending their course across Mount Zion and the City of David, and passing into the Vale by the Pool of Bathsheba.

No place in the world, except the Holy City, could have supplied such an assembly as was now collected in the sepulchre. In the perpetual fermentation of its spiritual elements, Jerusalem was always throwing up a scum of superstition, assuming every variety of shape, from simple fanaticism to demoniacal possession and raving delirium. In the present congress, pretenders and sanctimonious mountebanks of all sorts were added to the list, so that it comprised specimens of mere hypocritical knavery, unconscious self-delusion, blind bigoted enthusiasm, and all their intermediate shades. Here were to be seen, exclusively of the different Pharisaical devotees, the monthly prognosti-

cator, with his tablets and horoscope; the diviner, spanning his long mystical staff with his fingers; the devout juggler, pretending to vomit fire out of his mouth; the charmer, with serpents coiling and hissing round his throat, by which he practised divination; the hooded-witch, like her of Endor, muttering and mumbling spells; enchanter, sorcerers, and wizards, with their wands and magical books, most of whom were at the same time ventriloquists, and pretended to make their oracular responses come out of a bottle; and the necromancer, who, by sleeping upon a newly made grave, could obtain communion with the dead, and learn from them the future state of the living. To these must be added the zealots, foaming at the mouth, falling into ecstasies, and gashing themselves with knives till the blood spurted from their bodies; and the possessed with devils, writhing their limbs, and uttering maniacal howlings. Let the reader imagine the effect of such an

assemblage surrounding a supposed prophet's tomb within a rocky vault, their bearded faces expressing every variety of passion, from cold hypocrisy to fiery phrensy, their eyes sparkling like live coals, and all illuminated or thrown into dark shade by the fitful glare of a lamp suspended from the roof of the cavern.

Tubal the Pharisee was already within it ; but his crafty, insidious character prompted him to ensconce himself in the darker recesses of the sepulchre, where he might watch without taking any active part in the perilous proceedings of the night. The buzz, the muttering, and the howling, were in some degree checked when Salome and Barjona entered ; for the former was respected not only as being a relation of the King, and the wife of the Sagan, but as a woman of ambitious and undaunted character ; while the latter had obtained a moral dominion over these various spirits, intractable as they appeared, by his hypocritical mortifications,

but more especially by his irresistible eloquence. Seeing that they were in a state of excitement fitted for his purpose, he took his station at the head of the tomb, and having commanded silence in a voice that seemed almost sufficient to rend asunder the decrepit body from which it issued, he was about to address the heterogeneous company, when a little pragmatical doctor of the law, who, in the true spirit of his profession, imagined that the most important question, in the present crisis of the city, was to settle a frivolous point of precedency, started up, and wishing apparently to establish his own right to speak before Barjona, reminded his auditors, in a very formal exordium, that according to the Mishna of the Tanaites, confirmed by the revelations of the Bath-col, a Priest was before a Levite, a Levite before an Israelite, an Israelite before a Mamzer, a Mamzer before a Nethin, a Nethin before a proselyte, and a proselyte before a manumitted bondsman.

“ But,” added the orator, “ this is only to be understood so long as they are of equal quality in other respects ; for if a Mamzer be well studied in the Law, and the High Priest a mere ignorant, the former takes precedence of the latter.” As the object of the speaker began by this time to be pretty well seen, he was here interrupted by loud cries of “ Barjona ! Barjona ! ”—and, retiring with evident marks of dissatisfaction from the prominent post he had assumed, he was obliged to give way to the more popular demagogue.

Having placed a naked sword in his paralytic right-hand, which he supported upon the top of the tomb, Barjona commenced his speech. Who but they who already knew him would have imagined that such a wreck and remnant of humanity could have poured forth a torrent of eloquence so sonorous, fiery, and splendid ? It might indeed have been thought that his lips had been touched by a live coal from the altar,

—but from the altar of Moloch, from the unhallowed fires of faction, sedition, and turbulence. Beginning by flattering his auditors, he called them Heaven-tending men, like the smoke that went up from the sacred incense,—saints and holy ones, the sole survivors of a degenerate people, like the few berries left in the uppermost branch of an olive-tree ; and having by a strain of similar adulation gratified their individual vanity, he appealed to their national pride, called them the most antient, renowned, and valorous nation in the world, recited the great exploits of their former illustrious generals, Joshua, Gideon, Jephtha, David, Josiah, and others, and contrasted the character of the effeminate Antigonus not only with these, but more especially with the fierce and fearless Maccabees, of whom he was the unworthy descendant. “ Shall we suffer these Pagans,” he demanded, “ to put a hook in the nose of God’s people, and a bridle between their lips ?

Shall we say of the Roman eagle, that the spreading out of its wings is as the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel ! Shall the bastard who dwelt in Ashdod have dominion over the Temple of the Lord ? Shall the Idolaters of Italy, lying upon beds of ivory, and stretching themselves upon couches, make us pass into a new Captivity, and compel the enslaved Israelite to gather for their use the produce of Palestine, the glorious beauty set upon the head of our fat valleys, while the daughters of Jerusalem become the Dalilahs of the uncircumcised ?”

After pursuing this strain for some time, until he had almost wrought up his auditors to fury, he declared that Herod was not only disqualified from becoming their King by his having an Idumæan for his mother, but by his unnatural alliance with the common enemy ; and finally, having detailed the plans and projects of the conspirators for getting rid of the besiegers and delivering the city, he pronounced a glow-

ing eulogium on the magnanimous and heroic son of Salome, the only person qualified by his intrepid character for ruling over the Jews in the present crisis of the State, and concluded his speech by shouting out—" God save King Ephraim !"

While he had been speaking, the involuntary twitches and shudderings of his paralytic arm frequently rattled the naked sword upon the tomb, whence there issued an ominous and hollow, but at the same time a martial sound, that harmonized well with his spirit-stirring oration ; awaking in some a feeling of deep awe, and inflaming the enthusiasm of others to the highest pitch of excitement. So startling and unexpected, however, was his concluding proposition, that several were dumbfounded ; although the majority, fired by the empassioned appeal that had been made to them, vociferated, " Down with Antigonus ! Long live King Ephraim !"

" Down with Antigonus ! Down with all

Kings !" shrieked a fiery-eyed zealot, leaping upon the tomb,—“ God is the only King of the Jews, and our proper government a Theocracy. When our ancestors impiously clamoured for a monarch, the prophet Samuel foretold that if they had one he would enslave them, and make their daughters perfumers, cooks, and pastry-servants. Saul was given to them in wrath and for a punishment. Tyrants have our Kings been to us ever since, nor can we expect the favour of Heaven till we sacrifice all these usurpers, and acknowledge none for our ruler but the great King, the glorious Lord of Heaven !—Alleluia ! Alleluia !”

“ Come down, thou frantic wretch !” shouted Barjona, stretching out his left hand, as if he would have dragged him from the tomb, and drowning with his powerful voice every other in the place.

“ Thou Koph ! thou ape ! thou bawling Moabite !” cried the zealot. “ Thou traitor

to the Lord ! The spirit of Phinehas is burning in my bones, and I will sacrifice another Zimri for the honour of my God !” So saying, he leaped down upon the unfortunate Barjona, plunged his dagger in his heart, and they both rolled in the dust together.

In an instant, the whole sepulchre was a scene of indescribable tumult. Those labouring under demoniacal possession yelled and howled amid convulsive writhings : cries of rage were mingled with the applauding shouts of a few zealous devotees, who would have supported the murder perpetrated by their fanatical brother ; but they were quickly overpowered ; swords and daggers gleamed in the dim light of the cavern ; and the assassin, covered with innumerable wounds, was soon stretched beside his victim. Salome looked eagerly around for her confederate Tubal the Pharisee, that he might assist in quelling the disturbance ; but it had no sooner commenced than he had stolen from the

sepulchre, fearing that the death of Barjona would occasion the total failure of their enterprise, and eager to secure himself from the consequence of discovery by taking refuge in the tower. Deprived as she thus was of the two colleagues upon whom she had mainly relied for success, the masculine spirit of Salome became emboldened by the magnitude of the danger, and she determined to address the assembly before it dispersed, to urge them to an immediate insurrection, and to offer to put herself at its head. It was easier, however, to raise those fiery spirits than to allay them. Raving, half delirious, and all ranting together, the different parties seemed rather disposed to turn their swords against one another, than against the King or the common enemy ; and it was not till after repeated appeals and supplications that she succeeded in pacifying them so far as to obtain a momentary silence. Just as she was about to avail herself of it for the purpose of

addressing her auditory, the harp suspended over the tomb of the deceased prophet, thrilled and vibrated ; and anon a loud, solemn, funeral strain floated through the sepulchre !

No injunction to silence was now necessary ; for all stood aghast and speechless, riveting their eyes upon the suspended harp until the music had ceased.

“ It is the dirge of Adoniram,” whispered one who stood near the tomb ; “ he composed it for the funerals of our Kings.”

“ His spirit hath risen from the grave,” said another, in a low reverent tone, “ and announces to us, by the mournful voice of his harp, upon which it hath breathed, that the last days of Jerusalem herself are at hand.”

“ It is a dirge for Solyma,” uttered a third : “ she is about to lay down her stately head for ever in the dust.”

“ Dotards !” cried the undaunted Salome, who saw the spirit of revolt was rapidly yielding to

the influence of superstitious terrors, “ what madness possesses ye ? There is trick and jugglery in this. Some knave or traitor, concealed in the interior vaults, must have struck his instrument ; for, what music can proceed from this suspended harp, disordered and untuned as it is ? If the spirit of Adoniram be arisen, I command it to go down again into the tomb ; and as to this harp, which makes ye all tremble and turn pale as ye gaze upon it, behold ! it scares not me, for thus do I smite it in defiance ! ”

She struck it sharply with her right-hand, when two or three of the strings broke with an unearthly, jarring sound, that seemed to thrill through the hearts of the auditors ; for they continued staring in transfixed silence, as if expecting that some instant portent or chastisement would follow the presumptuous deed. At this moment, a gigantic figure, enveloped in black sackcloth, stalked forwards from the dim re-

cesses of the caverns, ejaculating in a deep sepulchral voice, “Woe, woe to Jerusalem !”

Seized with an instantaneous panic, the whole assembly rushed tumultuously out of the vaults, with loud outcries of “Nabal the Black Shadow ! Nabal the Black Shadow !”—hurrying Salome along with them, in spite of her indignant reproaches of their cowardicē and superstition, until she found herself at the foot of the stairs leading up the precipitous rock into the city ; when, being aware that her safety had now become compromised by the present failure of her project, she determined not to return any more to the Sagan’s house, but to join her remaining confederates in the strong tower of the wall.

On the following morning, it was observed that the besieging army, both Roman and auxiliary, were busily employed in fixing and fortifying their camp, unlading their ammunition, and preparing their towers, battering-rams, and engines, without sending out scouts or detach-

ments, or immediately proceeding to invest the city on any other side. Zillah, whose enthusiasm had recovered all its energy by inspiring dreams in the night-time, attended, as usual, the mustering and reviewing of the troops, where, in conjunction with Micah, the young Galilean, she encouraged them by hymns and war-songs; and, fearing that the presence of the hostile troops might soon prevent her from having access to the tombs of the prophets, and other religious monuments, beyond the walls of the city, she went down in the evening to the Valley of Jehosaphat, that she might behold them once more. Leaving the Pillar of Absalom and the Tomb of Zachary to her left, she passed the great Pigeon-house, and proceeded as far as Mount Aceldama, which she ascended a little way, and, seating herself upon a crag at the entrance to one of the tombs of the prophets, turned round to take a survey of Jerusalem. The sun was setting behind Mount

Zion, illuminating the tops of the loftier buildings, and the Maccabee banners upon the summits of the palace and the Temple, throwing a broad dark shadow across the Valley of Jehosaphat, as far as the base of the opposite Mount of Olives, and again irradiating its three crests, upon which the hostile army was encamped. Their tents were gleaming in the ray; the flash of arms and armour could occasionally be distinguished, as well as the moving figures of elephants and camels; and as Zillah sat admiring the beautiful scenery of nature, and the rich mellow tints of evening, blending together in one harmonious picture, the Holy City and the besieging army, a melancholy feeling pressed upon her heart, as she reflected how soon the angry passions of man would mar this loveliness and tranquillity, how soon the hallowed precincts of Jerusalem would be desecrated by blood, and all the hideous tumult of war.

In such reveries she remained immersed, until the sun had been for some time set, when her attention was at length attracted by what appeared to be a small luminous cloud, advancing towards her from the Valley of Hinnom, and again suddenly receding, sometimes throwing its pale sickly light against the precipitous rock under the arsenal, upon Mount Zion, after which it would flit athwart the waters of Gihon, and shed a ghastly glare upon the opposite heights. An ignis fatuus was no uncommon spectacle in the fat valleys that surrounded Jerusalem, and this only differed from others that Zillah had previously seen, by its greater extent, appearing at times to cover a space of two or three acres. It vanished at length, and the increased darkness, occasioned by its disappearance, warning her of the lateness of the hour, she was preparing to return home, when she again beheld it dancing along the craggy mount upon which she sat ;

while a tall black figure, whose proportions were magnified by his elevated position, and the train of ominous light that followed him, seemed to be marching at its head. Recollecting her loneliness, and the immediate neighbourhood of the enemy, Zillah was filled with increasing apprehension, as the object came nearer and nearer, until it at length halted upon a projecting rock, not far from her, when, by the aid of the wide-spreading halo with which it was now invested, she recognised the venerable beard and the majestic form of Nabal. Nothing could be more sublime than his appearance, glorified round about with meteoric fire, as if, like another Elijah, he were about to be rapt up into Heaven. Turning himself towards the city, and uplifting his arms, he exclaimed, in a solemn and sonorous voice, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! the wine-press is full, the vats overflow, the measure of thy iniquities is accomplished. Once already has

the Roman scaled thy strong walls, and violated thy sanctuary ; and again, when the same day comes round, shall he put his foot upon the neck of the queen of cities. Yet a few years longer, and thy final doom shall be sealed ! Then shalt thou become a howling wilderness, a possession for the owl, the cormorant, and the bittern ; a haunt and lair for wild beasts. The light of thy lamps shall go out, and the voice of man shall be no longer heard within thy precincts. Satyrs shall dance in thy pleasant palaces and proud halls ; the dragon shall sit upon the great altar of the deserted Temple ; and for the sweet sound of harp and cithern, dulcimer and shawm, for the solemn chant of the choir, and the melodious voices of the daughters of the Levites, there shall be heard the howling of the wolf, the wailful cry of the jackal, the croak of frogs, and the hissing of serpents ! Woe ! woe to Jerusalem !”

Zillah had long wished to have access to Na-

bal, in whose predictions she placed entire confidence, in order that she might propound to him certain questions of individual interest ; but every thing bearing relation to herself appeared so unimportant when compared with the threatened fate of the Holy City, that it vanished altogether from her thoughts, and she listened for some time in reverent silence to catch any farther accents that might fall from his lips. All, however, was again hushed, nor was the speaker himself any longer visible ; the meteoric light had flitted away to some other quarter ; the crag whereon he had stood was wrapped in darkness ; and Zillah, filled with solemn and desponding thoughts, descended from the mouth of the tomb at which she had been sitting, traversed the Valley of Jehosaphat, and re-entered the Holy City by the Water-gate.

This prediction of the present capture of Jerusalem, and of its total destruction at no

remote period, although it weighed heavily upon her heart at the moment, did not by any means chill the fervour of her enthusiasm. Nabal might be mistaken in his forebodings, but even if they should be confirmed by the event, it was not the less her manifest and imperative duty to assist, by all the means in her power, in defending the Holy City, and the Sanctuary of the Lord, against the desecration of idolaters. She continued, therefore, to attend the meetings of the troops, encouraging them by her voice and harp ; and if, in the interval of these lofty and stimulating pursuits, her thoughts occasionally reverted to Esau, the mystery of the talismanic necklace, or to the more tender subject of her attachment to Felix, it was only that she might congratulate herself upon her comparative indifference to the former topics, while she trusted that the latter weakness would soon be totally eradicated from a

bosom which it now disquieted much less painfully than before.

The strict discipline and well-known vigilance of the Romans rendered any attempt to surprise their camp in the night-time utterly hopeless, but it was deemed advisable to attack that of Herod, before he had completed his entrenchments and built up his towers. Great preparations were made and precautions used to secure the success of this assault, as it was well known that, with a people so superstitious as the Jews, much would depend on the event of the first encounter : others, however, discouraged the attempt altogether, urging that the impetuosity and insubordination of the Hebrew soldiers, particularly disqualified them for an exploit demanding obedience and strict discipline. To silence these sinister remarks, and to encourage the soldiers by recalling the fortunate issue of similar achievements in former times, Zillah

composed a martial song, extolling the patriotic valour of Jonathan and his Armour-bearer, who stole into the camp of the Philistines when they were asleep, and threw the whole army into confusion ; and the courage of David, who, in like manner, entered the camp of Saul unperceived, carrying away his lance and his pitcher of water from his bed-side ; but more particularly dwelling upon the great victory obtained by Judas Maccabeus, when he surprised the tent of Lysias, slaying four thousand men, with the chief of the elephants, and all that were upon them. Such a mode of appealing to the passions of the Israelites seldom failed of success. The pride of their past glories stimulated them to fresh deeds of valour, and the troops selected for the present attack burnt with impatience to signalize the commencement of the siege by some brilliant action. They were separated into two divisions, directed towards opposite extremities of Herod's encamp-

ment. Micah, the Galilean, went forth with the second of these detachments; while Zillah, at the request of several of the chiefs and captains, consented to accompany the first to a certain distance beyond the city walls; but however exalted might be her enthusiasm, and zealous as she felt for the honour of the enterprise, her feminine and gentle heart revolted from any participation in the actual horrors of warfare. Of these she hoped to be spared even the sight, deeming it perfectly unnecessary that her feelings should be thus harrowed; but should circumstances prevent the gratification of this wish, she stood prepared to perform her duty to God and her country, regardless of any painful emotions to herself with which it might be attended.

“ Victory is of God !” the watchword given out by Judas Maccabeus, previously to his attack upon Lysias, was chosen for the present expedition, and received by the soldiers with

increased confidence, as of happy and holy omen. The priests, with their silver trumpets and ram's-horns, which, however, for obvious reasons, they did not sound, marched at their head ; reminding them that they were going forth to fight against the blasphemous nations, for the laws, the Temple, the city, the country, the commonwealth, and the God of the Jews ; while Zillah, in the intervals of their exhortations, struck her psaltery, and in a low voice chanted the song she had composed for this express occasion. It was past midnight when they thus marched out in silence and deep darkness towards the heights of Mount Olivet, upon the farther summits of which Herod's army was encamped. Zillah, having accompanied them as far as the bridge over the Cedron, took refuge in a small house, which had been deserted by its owners since the appearance of the enemy, and signifying to the troops that she should there await their return, in

order that they might re-enter the Holy City together, she bade them farewell, with a prayer for their success.

Vain were the attempt to describe the vehement pulsations of her heart, which throbbed as if it would beat through her bosom, or to describe the keen suspense, gradually increasing to agony, as she sat in solitude, silence, and darkness, listening for some sound that might enable her to guess the probable result of the enterprise. At length there came faintly and fitfully upon the night breeze the shouts of men, the clangour of distant trumpets and horns, and, sharper than all, the wild shrill cry of elephants, whence she drew a favourable augury, concluding that some of those formidable animals were perishing beneath the swords of her countrymen. She looked out, but the darkness rendered every object invisible. The same noises, however, floated towards her, telling of desperate conflict, of blood, uproar, and

death, beyond the summit of the Mount ; while from the hushed valley beneath no sound proceeded, save the gentle rippling of the Cedron, and the low murmur of the olive-trees slightly wafted by the cool night wind.

At length the troops returned in the exhilaration and disorder of victory, for the surprise had been complete ; they had killed many men and elephants ; a panic fear had seized Herod's auxiliaries, who fled after a short resistance, and the Jews were laden with the spoil of the camp. The second detachment, however, which Micah, the Galilean, had accompanied, had not been so fortunate. Encountering a Roman cohort, which marched hastily to the assistance of their allies at the commencement of the alarm, the Israelites had been overthrown, and many of them made prisoners ; but a Roman eagle-bearer, separated from his comrades in the confusion and darkness, had been slain by the first division, and, as they recrossed

the Cedron at the spot where Zillah was stationed, they bore the captured standard triumphantly before them. In this manner they marched back to the city, the morning sun shooting down from the eastern heights to emblazon the golden eagle, and disclose the extent of the spoil, just as the victorious array reached the walls.

Ever sanguine and sensitive, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who had been anxiously expecting the return of the expedition, were thrown into a paroxysm of joy and blind confidence at this visible assurance of its complete success, but more especially at the sight of the eagle. The females, willing to ascribe to one of their own sex a considerable share in so important an achievement, came forward to meet Zillah with dulcimers and tabrets, dancing around her, and singing canticles of gratulation and welcome ; while the men hastened to deposit the captured standard in the Temple, which was done with

many solemnities, followed by a chant of thanksgiving from the full choir and the whole multitude collected within the courts. Imagining that they beheld in this insignificant advantage the total rout of their enemies, and the deliverance of Jerusalem, the overweening Israelites could not repress their extravagant exultation. Every heart was suddenly raised up from despondency, and thrown into a momentary delirium : old and young laughed, and wept, and sang, and prayed, and embraced one another, and then ran to another quarter to spread the glad tidings with similar manifestations of irrepressible emotion. In the infatuation of this ebullient transport, Zillah was hailed by some as a deliverer, a prophetess, a commissioned abettor of the Israelites, whose voice and harp had encouraged them to achieve the victory they had just won ; and although her native modesty recoiled from these intemperate eulogies, the warm congratulations of her

friends, the embraces of her delighted father, and the humble trust that she had to a certain extent been instrumental in conferring a benefit upon her country, sank deep into her bosom, and fed the religious and patriotic enthusiasm of her heart, which ever after, at the glad terrible sound of the trumpet, would leap and thrill, as if ready to burst with solemn joy.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON the second night after this occurrence, Zillah was awakened by the noise of some heavy substance falling into the garden beneath. Though by no means of a timid disposition, she thought, that in the present beleaguered situation of the town, every unusual sound deserved attention, especially as their dwelling adjoined the city wall, on the side immediately opposite to the encampment of the besieging army. Hastily dressing herself, therefore, she opened the window, crossed the gallery, and looked down into the moon-lighted garden, in which, however, she could perceive no moving object,

nothing that could have occasioned the disturbance. Convinced that her senses had not deceived her, and determined to ascertain, if possible, whence it had proceeded, she went down into the garden, when, upon reaching the farther extremity, she observed that one of the coping-stones of the wall had fallen inwards upon the walk. Concluding it to have been accidental, she was about to return to the house, when, from the midst of shrubs and roses in the deep shade behind her, a voice exclaimed, “Zillah ! my beloved Zillah ! is it you ?” And, upon starting round, she beheld the figure of a man, bearded like a Hebrew, and wearing the garments of an Israelitish soldier. The voice that she had heard, and a single glance of her eye, having rendered this disguise nugatory, she clasped her hands in sudden emotion, ejaculating “Felix ! Felix ! good Heaven ! whence came you, and why are you here ?” when, overcome by surprise and agitation, she sunk upon a seat,

beside a little arbour of roses. “Forgive me, dearest Zillah, if I have alarmed you, if I have committed an error in thus stealing into your presence,” said Felix, advancing in front of the arbour. “I have struggled long and vehemently with the passion that consumes, that at times has almost maddened me. The claims of family, private attachment, glory, patriotism, have all fought fiercely in my bosom against one single antagonist ; that one is love, and it has conquered, extinguished, annihilated them all. The circumstances in which I am placed brook not delay—I would not offend your delicacy—pardon the suddenness of the avowal, when I declare that I love you, with an ardour that has burnt up every other feeling of my heart, that is gradually withering away my life. I have suffered till I could endure no longer. Your city is about to be closely invested, and I might never have had access to you again. In

the night attack upon Herod's camp, I saved the life of one of your soldiers—I will spare all that fall into my power, for they are the fellow-countrymen of Zillah. I borrowed his garb, that my appearance might excite the less suspicion, should I be observed ; by means of an interpreter, I learnt from him how I might crawl into the town, through the dry aq̄educt, beside the Water-gate ; he instructed me how to find your house ; and the rope-ladder with which I had provided myself, enabled me to scale your garden-wall."

"Rash, rash and inconsiderate Felix !" exclaimed Zillah, who had no sooner recovered her first surprise than she became terrified at the danger he was incurring ; "Are you aware, that to be known as a Roman in Jerusalem, is to have a thousand swords striking at your life?"

"I care not for my life ; I am tired of it : and how could I better peril it than in seeking

an opportunity of telling you that I love you, dearest Zillah, deeply, unalterably, with the devotion of my whole heart."

"Alas ! Felix, and have you come up hither from Alexandria, and placed yourself in such deadly jeopardy, to tell me this ?"

"I came with the besieging force ; my uncle Sosius is General of the whole army, and I hold no mean command beneath him ; but this, and every thing else am I willing, eager to sacrifice for you. Listen to me, Zillah ! I would not make the proposition I am about to do, if I thought myself altogether unworthy your acceptance. Repeated perusals of the Sacred Volume you placed in my hands, have made me ashamed that I should ever have been a pagan. It is a pride, a glory, a transport to me, that here in the Holy City, here in the hallowed vicinity of the Temple, I may solemnly declare myself a believer in the one true God of the Hebrews, a follower of the faith, and of the

Law of Moses. Since this conversion, in obedience to the practice of the Israelites, I have suffered my beard to grow, and shall rejoice when I can become an accepted proselyte of the Covenant. That I can equally deserve your love in other respects I dare not assert; but I can with truth affirm, that I tender to you a pure and uncontaminated heart; that you have its first offerings; that I never loved any but you; and that, if I fail in securing your affections, I care not how soon I throw away in battle a life which it will then become a burthen to retain."

Though the tones of Felix, as he spoke, betrayed little of vehemence or passion, they breathed that deep solemn earnestness which, coming unequivocally from the heart of the speaker, instantly penetrates that of the auditor with a conviction of its truth. Such was its effect upon Zillah; she was touched in the most sensitive point; the attachment that had been

suppressed, though never subdued, again electrified her bosom, and a thrill of tenderness, not unmingled with a secret consciousness of delight, suffused her with a burning blush. It was but for a moment that she was thus overcome; the situation of her country flashed across her mind, and she said, in the calmness of recovered self-possession, "Is this a time, Felix, for the frivolous discourse of love; is this a moment for consulting our individual passions, when the Holy City is begirt with enemies, and I am called upon to defend, so far as a feeble woman's powers may speed the glorious work, the inheritance of the chosen people, and the sanctuary of the Lord? What did you propose to yourself in seeking this interview?"

"If you thought me worthy of your affections, I meant to urge, to implore, to supplicate that you would fly with me from Jerusalem, ere its close investment renders all escape

impossible. What can you expect by remaining within its walls, except to share uselessly the sufferings of the siege, to be exposed to all the horrors of its capture. Desperate, frantic as are your people, do they dream of ultimately conquering the invincible Romans? Preposterous thought! Zillah, I swear to you that the doom of Jerusalem is sealed! The troops that Sosius has with him I believe to be more than equal to his purpose, for Herod has numerous confederates within the town; but even were it otherwise, can you imagine that the all-powerful mistress of the wide world would suffer herself to be foiled by a single city, defended by a few beaten fugitives?"

"We have an ally still more puissant and invincible than even the all-powerful Rome."

"Who can that be?" enquired Felix.

"God!" replied Zillah, in a tone and with a look of devout exultation.

"Be it so!" continued Felix; "in that case,

Jerusalem will the less need your services, for Omnipotence requires not mortal coadjutors. In no alternative can you prevent or even retard the predestined fate of the Holy City ; neither can my presence or absence influence the fortunes of imperial Rome. Why, then, should we sacrifice our happiness to the quarrels of our respective countries, to the designs of a criminal ambition in which we take no share ? Let us fly together, dearest Zillah ; let us escape the hideous scenes of blood and horror that are preparing for Jerusalem. For the first time in my life I shall respect my wealth, if by rendering me independent of localities, it may enable us to seek out some peaceful bower, where I may gratefully devote to you the remainder of my life, where we may pass our days in love and joy, in the exercise of our common religion, in the diffusion of happiness amid our fellow-creatures ! Zillah ! my beloved Zillah ! listen to the whisperings of your own

heart; does it not tell you that such an existence is more congenial to your nature than to be a dweller in a besieged and doomed city, to be conversant with agony and slaughter, to be exposed to all the brutality and outrage of a capture by assault?"

To this appeal, which was uttered in a tone of impassioned tenderness, Zillah was not insensible, as the vehement throbbings of her heart too well assured her; but she commanded her emotion, and contented herself with saying, "Have you forgotten that I have friends—a father?"

"The Sagan might accompany you in your flight. It were best that he should do so, for Herod will not spare him in the hour of his triumph."

"My father will never desert his duty, never quit the Holy City!"

"Zillah! do I not offer to give up every thing for you? Friends, country, rank, mili-

tary glory ! I am ready to sacrifice them all ; and if your bosom were fired by the same passion that reigns despotic in my own——”

“ No, Felix, no !” interposed Zillah ; “ it is animated, I hope, by a nobler and more lofty enthusiasm. Let us pursue this conversation no farther ; it may pain us both, it can do no good to either. The line of our respective duty is clear and manifest ; let neither of us swerve from it. For myself, I will never desert the city and the sanctuary of the Lord ; I will stand or fall in the cause of God and my country. You, Felix, have to obey the calls of honour and patriotism, to uphold the fame of a long line of illustrious ancestors. Fate has opposed us to one another ; let us submit to our destiny, controlling passion by conscience, acquitting ourselves with firmness and integrity of the obligations imposed upon us, and leaving our ultimate disposal to the will of God.”

“ Fool that I was to flatter myself so long

with a delusive hope ! I see it now—you do not, cannot love me !” exclaimed Felix, in a voice that became hollow and unnatural, from the endeavour to suppress his emotion. “ The endearing epithet that escaped from your lips in the citadel of Alexandria was unmeant, was foreign to your heart ; yet how did I doat and live upon the recollection of it ! how did that one single intoxicating word uphold me in my imprisonment, and solace me while I was recovering from my wounds !”

This allusion to the sufferings he had undergone in the generous attempt to rescue her, was almost too much for the fortitude of Zillah. Her bosom heaved with painful throbs, and some seconds elapsed before she could recover breath enough to exclaim, “ Felix ! Felix ! you cannot doubt the gratitude, the admiration—you cannot imagine that I have forgotten—that I can ever forget the devoted valour you displayed on that occasion, or the affectionate fore-

thought that rescued me from the power of Mark Antony. Perhaps a time may come, when I can testify more unequivocally my sense of your noble conduct; but it must not be now. God and our country supersede all individual claims."

"I see through these ingenious pretexts: you do not love me—you hate me, you despise me!" said Felix, in an agitation that was now no longer to be concealed. "Why did you save my life in the Theatre at Rome; why did you not leave me to perish, that so I might have been spared the painful struggle of my subsequent existence, have escaped the humiliation and the anguish of the present moment?"

As he spoke, he placed his hand upon the trellis-work of the little arbour; it trembled so violently as to shake down the dew from the roses, some of which fell upon Zillah's arm; "You are agitated—you are disturbed!" she exclaimed, much affected at this proof of his

deep emotion, “or you would not speak of me so unkindly, so unjustly. Am I not a friend to you, even more than you are to yourself, when I counsel you to abandon this mad project? What would be said of you were I to accede to it? That you had deserted the army at the moment of a perilous siege, that you had eloped with one of the enemies of your country, for such I profess myself; and thus, in one moment of blind ungovernable passion, would you overthrow that military reputation which it has been the business of your life to build up, and cast an indelible stigma upon the hitherto spotless name of the Fabricii.”

“ I should possess Zillah, which would atone to me, a thousand times over, for every other loss. What is there in the word glory, what is there in an empty name, that I should resign for it a life of happiness and love? Love! idle dream! Zillah, perhaps, has already bestowed hers upon some fortunate Hebrew; and can only look

upon me as one of the enemies of her country."

"Ungenerous Felix! can I ever think of you but as my preserver from the atrocious designs of Mark Antony?"

"I want not this: if I have any claim to your gratitude, evince it by your actions, not by professions, however sincere. This is no time for vain discussions. Tell me, Zillah, in one word, will you or will you not fly with me from Jerusalem; will you become the wife of Felix Fabricius, converted to the faith of the Hebrews; will you permit him to devote to your happiness every moment of his remaining life?"

"In one word, then, I answer, No!—Religion and patriotism forbid that I should ever become such a traitress to both!"

"Enough, enough! I am satisfied!" exclaimed Felix, striking his hand upon his forehead; "my brain throbs—my heart is swell-

ing, bursting with this cruel disappointment of its fondest hopes ! But all will soon be over : in the first sortie of your troops I can throw away a life which you have now rendered worthless. I will obey your injunctions ; I will die in the performance of my duty. It will be a consolation to me that my bones will lie within the precincts of the Holy City, and not far from the dwelling-place of Zillah !”

“ Compose yourself, Felix ; speak not thus wildly ; abandon not yourself to these despairing thoughts,” exclaimed Zillah, who began to find her own courage waning in the gushes of tenderness that thrilled through her bosom. “ See, see ! the eastern skies already begin to grow pale with the morning light. Good heavens ! what will become of you, if you are discovered ! Fly ! I conjure you, fly ; your life may be the forfeit of another minute’s delay.”

“ Death will be now welcome to me anywhere. I may as well perish within the city as

beyond its ramparts. I shall be still nearer to you." His whole frame trembled violently as he spoke ; but his voice, though hollow, was not tremulous ; it betokened rather the calmness of settled despair. Zillah, filled with terror, with agony at the apprehension that he was delaying his escape till the morning light would render it impracticable, now exclaimed, in a tone of passionate earnestness, " Felix ! I implore you, by the Deity whom we both adore, tarry no longer, but fly while yet you may. It is the only request I ever made of you. If you love me, dearest Felix, obey me !"

" *Dearest* Felix ! a second time do I hear that transporting word ? Trifle not with me, Zillah ; my heart will not bear it : but tell me, and tell me truly, am I, indeed, dear to you ?"

" If the confession will persuade you to fly : if it will induce you to discard your despairing thoughts, and preserve a life for which there may yet be much happiness in store,—urge me

not to be more explicit ; suffice it, that I could not, consistently with truth, recall the word I have used."

" I ask no more; there is transport, bliss, ecstasy in the avowal—it is enough that I may be allowed to hope !" passionately exclaimed Felix, seizing the trembling hand of his mistress, and pressing it to his lips, to his throbbing heart.

" Fly, fly !" faltered Zillah, covering her deeply suffused face with her other hand.

" I obey. I will not lose a moment in preserving my life, for it is now of inestimable value. A thousand thanks—a thousand blessings attend you ! Farewell ! farewell !" So saying, he hastened up the rope-ladder, drew it after him, whispered another farewell, and disappeared ; while Zillah, as soon as her struggling emotions had found present relief in a burst of tears, hurried to the oratory, and

sought the more effectual solace of prayer and supplication.

Her subsequent reflections upon this interview were not unattended with pain and self-reproach, for it had convinced her, that the attachment which she had vainly imagined to have been eradicated from her bosom, was dormant, not extinct ; nor did she feel satisfied that the confession she had made to Felix, an armed assailant of the Holy City, ought ever to have passed the lips of one of the daughters of Jerusalem. It might, however, have been the means of saving him from some desperate act : she had unequivocally announced to him, that she should continue to perform her duty towards God and her country ; and as a pledge of her sincerity, it was her first care to direct the aqueduct to be blocked up, that no enemy might have access to the town, but above all, that Felix might not expose himself and her to the pain and peril of another meeting.

The city was now closely invested upon all sides, and the siege had regularly commenced, but it is not our purpose to invade the province of history, by giving a minute detail of its progress, though we may relate an incident of a domestic nature, which conferred upon it a peculiar interest in the eyes of Zillah and Lilla. By mounting to the covered cistern upon the top of the Sagan's house, the camp and the proceedings of the assailants, as they gradually brought their towers and machines nearer and nearer to the walls, could be plainly discerned. This became accordingly the favourite station of Lilla, who looked forward with intense anxiety to the termination of the siege, as the period of her deliverance from captivity, of her restoration to Jareb and to the wilderness, the two great objects of her affection. A loud scream of joy, uttered one morning by Lilla, induced Zillah to hasten to the top of the house, to ascertain the cause of

her emotion. She had recognised her lover riding, with another horseman, along the slope of Mount Olivet, and pointed him out to her companion, exclaiming, in a transport of exultation ; “ I knew him by his black Arabian horse—I knew him by his gallant bearing, by the grace and ease with which he sits his fiery steed, for who can ride like Jareb ? ” Zillah scarcely bestowed a glance upon the object of her friend’s admiration ; her eyes were fixed, riveted upon his companion, in whom she instantly recognised Felix. The cavaliers repeatedly pointed towards the city, as if occupied in inspecting its fortifications, a proceeding which presently occasioned a flight of arrows and stones to be brandished at them from the bowmen and slingers on the walls. Lilla drew her dagger at the sight, uttered a cry of rage, and would have hurried down to stab the soldiers who had dared to assault her lover ; but her companion, although she shuddered

at the danger incurred by Felix, restrained the impetuous girl, and bade her observe that both the horsemen had passed unharmed behind a small grove of olives.

More than once was Zillah's tenderness powerfully awakened, and her resolution put to the test by occurrences of a similar nature ; but never did she swerve from the line of duty which she had prescribed to herself. True to the cause of Jerusalem, she continued, in conjunction with Micah, the Galilean, to animate the troops by her presence and her songs, and even sometimes to accompany them a little way in their sorties ; cherishing still in the secret recesses of her heart an ineradicable attachment to Felix, but never suffering it to cool her patriotic fervour, or lessen the devotedness of her religious enthusiasm. The public duty to which she had dedicated herself was every day attended with greater personal peril as the besiegers advanced their works, and the conflicts

between the two parties became more close, desperate, and deadly. Committing herself to the protection of Heaven, Zillah was insensible to danger ; but her affectionate father, proud as he was of her undaunted zeal, trembled for the safety of his beloved daughter, and persuaded her to wear a helmet and breast-plate, and to carry a lance in her hand, as some little security, however inadequate, against a random arrow, or a straggling foe. Her martial appearance, he urged, would still farther tend to encourage the troops, especially if she wore the identical casque and cuirass which had belonged to the heroic Judith, the sister of Judas Maccabeus. She consented to his wishes ; the relics, taken from the arsenal where they had been preserved with religious care, were furbished and made refulgent for her use, and in this warlike array did the gentle-spirited but enthusiastic Zillah sometimes sally forth from Jerusalem at the head of her armed country-

men, singing hymns and devout canticles, and encouraging them to fight valiantly for the Lord and for his chosen sanctuary.

Renowned in all ages for their valour in the field, and for the inflexible obstinacy with which they defended fortified places, the Jews had more particularly distinguished themselves by their heroic devotedness, their desperation in vindicating the honour of the Holy City whenever it had been assailed. In its present beleaguerment they were not wanting to their former glory. They sallied out almost every day, leaping, shouting, dashing their arms upon their bucklers, and throwing themselves upon their adversaries with a fierce and almost frantic impetuosity ; but though they frequently overthrew portions of Herod's auxiliary army, the roaring torrent of their armed men did but beat itself to pieces against a rock of iron when it encountered the Roman legions. Thousands, however, were so eager to sacrifice themselves,

even for the remotest chance of success, that Sosius, the besieging general, was justified in observing, "We do not so much deprive these fanatics of life, as make them a present of death when we kill them." The works and machines of the enemy were repeatedly burnt in the night-time; stratagem was opposed to stratagem; as fast as one wall was thrown down, its place was supplied by new bulwarks and entrenchments; countermine was opposed to mine, and, as if the surface of the ground had not been wide enough for their conflict, the men employed in these subterranean works frequently encountered in the bowels of the earth, and made furious battle with their tools. But desperation and fierce valour, and even the exalted enthusiasm of the Jews, could not avail, ultimately, against the superior discipline, experience, and military science of the Romans. Two of the walls, and the Lower Town, had been already taken; and a growing despondency sad-

dened the hearts, although it did not quail the courage, or relax the exertions of those who retained possession of the Upper Town and the Temple, the two strongest points of the city.

In spite of her enthusiasm, Zillah could not avoid sympathising with this depression, especially when she recalled the prediction of Nabal, that when the anniversary of its previous capture came round, the Roman should again put his foot upon the neck of the queen of cities. That day was now rapidly approaching, and as it drew near, a sinister rumour of the prophecy began to spread itself through the town, and to deepen the dejection of the inhabitants. Zillah had never divulged what she had heard; no one could tell how or whence the report had sprung up; but in every quarter it was whispered about with mysterious injunctions of secrecy, that only occasioned it to be more widely circulated, and with more influential effects. To check the forbodings of the superstitious and

the disaffected, as well as to inflame the courage of the garrison, by making them the assailants, it was determined that a sortie with a strong force should be made on the morning in question ; while, on the other hand, Sosius and Herod, believing that the anniversary of the capture by Pompey, would be the most auspicious day for stimulating their army to the highest pitch of daring, had selected it for a vigorous assault of the town with their whole army, and in several quarters at once.

Lurid and lowering arose the morning that had been thus chosen by both sides for their last and most desperate effort. The wind sobbed and moaned around the battlements of the Holy City, as if muttering its dirge ; dark clouds, some of which assumed the appearance of a shroud of sackcloth, rolled heavily and ominously athwart the sky, sometimes totally obscuring the sun, at others allowing a glary light

to penetrate them, and shed the pale ghastly hues of death over the towers and walls. Portents and omens were said to be seen by many in the dim vapoury sky ;—an outstretched arm brandishing a naked sword ; seven golden vials pouring forth wrath ; an eagle perched upon a palm-tree, and other prodigies ; but as infinite pains were taken by the priests to interpret these rumoured visions as foretelling the destruction of the Roman host, the Jewish force went forth with stout hearts in the full assurance that some miracle would be wrought in their favour. To confirm this belief, the watchword chosen was, “ The help of God,” being the same taken by Judas Maccabeus when he joined battle with Nicanor, and totally routed him. Zillah, in her military accoutrements, went forth with them, so did Micah, the Galilean, playing on his harp and singing ; and the columns were headed by priests in their white

robes, alternately cheering the troops with psalms, or with a shrill, thrilling blast upon the silver trumpets.

They passed out by the gate Benjamin, at the north-east corner of the city : Zillah intending to quit them, and return upon their gaining the first ascent, after crossing the ravine at the foot of the walls. Just as they reached the summit of this eminence, they encountered a Roman cohort, coming up from the opposite side, neither party being aware of its adversary's approach until they were within a few paces of each other. The Romans were commanded by Felix, who instantly recognised Zillah ; and as the only expedient to save her from certain destruction, cried out to his men, in the first impulse of the moment—" Beat down the soldiers, but strike not at the goddess Minerva, who fights for the Jews !" The warlike array, the majestic figure, and the noble countenance of Zillah, being all calculated to support the

delusion, the whole cohort halted, lowered their arms, and gazed at the supposed celestial, with superstitious wonderment and awe ; when Micah, dashing his hand across his harp, shouted out—
“ A miracle ! a miracle ! The help of God is our watchword. Smite the Midianites, ye men of Israel ! ” At these animating words, the Hebrews, setting up a simultaneous cry, rushed upon their adversaries, who being seized with one of those panic fears to which even the Roman troops were liable, turned suddenly about, and fled down the declivity, pursued by the whole force of the Jews.

Zillah saw through the generous stratagem of Felix for the preservation of her life, but she had no time to reflect upon it, for the torrent of her rushing countrymen bore her forward with such impetuosity, that she had the greatest difficulty to avoid being thrown down and trampled under foot ; nor could she arrest her involuntary progress until she reached the centre

of the broad hollow that extended to the northern foot of Mount Olivet. Here the flight became a furious contest, for some of the Romans had rallied, others hastened forward to support them, and the Jews, exalted and maddened by the belief of miraculous assistance from Heaven, fought with a desperation that rendered them more than a match for their opponents. Appalled by the hideous clash and din of war, sickening at the sight of blood and anguish, Zillah looked eagerly about for some place of refuge, where she might hide herself from the horrors of the scene, and escape the darts and arrows which were now whistling around her. The foot of the opposite mount was perforated with tombs excavated out of the rock ; to the nearest of these she fled, reached it uninjured, and threw herself down within its dark recesses, exhausted both in body and mind by the struggle she had undergone, and the dismal spectacles she had witnessed.

The tumult and the clangour of battle continued for some time so loud and near that she ventured not to look forth; a delay which allowed her to recruit her bodily fatigues, but afforded no respite to her anxious thoughts. Her countrymen had triumphed, and triumphed too, over the Romans; a glorious achievement, which she would have contemplated at any other time with unmingled exultation; but it was now tarnished, darkened in her eyes by the most heart-rending forebodings about the fate of Felix, the magnanimous Felix, who had once more, she feared, desperately staked his life for her preservation. She had seen a miserable slaughter of his cohort;—what had become of its brave commander? He would disdain flight, and to combat unsupported was inevitable destruction. Her suspense at length becoming too acute, her anguish intolerable, she sallied forth from the sepulchre. The tide of battle was rolling away to the southward, towards the Garden of Geth-

semane ; the ground before her was thickly strewed with the dead and dying, but there were no longer any combatants around her, and she was about to hasten forward, that she might re-enter the city by the route in which she had quitted it, when she heard a loud and deep voice sounding from the heights above her, and upon looking up she beheld the venerable figure of Nabal standing upon a crag, and again apostrophising the Holy City : “ It is come ! it is come ! ” he exclaimed ; “ the day when Pompey scaled thy ramparts has come round, and again, O sinful Solyma ! dost thou lay down thy proud head, that the Roman may put his foot upon thy neck. Lo ! the Temple of the Lord is taken ! All is lost ! Woe, woe, to Jerusalem ! ”

From the spot where Nabal had stood, for he had again disappeared among the rocks, the whole city could be seen, whereas it was completely shut out from the observation of Zillah,

who remained in the hollow. Electrified by his appalling tidings, she hurried forward, again passing over the ground along which she had been borne in the impetuous descent of the troops, shocked at every step by the revolting spectacle of dead bodies, from which an irrepressible impulse rendered it impossible to avert her eyes, although she shuddered at every glance, lest she should recognise the lifeless form of Felix. As she advanced, she observed that the heavens lowered, an ominous gloom, as of an eclipse, shrouded the earth, the clouds seemed to be hurtling and making battle against one another in the sky, and a loud clap of thunder was hollowly reverberated from the surrounding mountains. As she pressed forward through the gloom, she observed a kneeling figure holding a harp, of which he was violently snapping the strings. It was Micah, the Galilean. Mortally wounded, and incapable of quitting his position, his unquenchable enthusiasm vented

itself in a burst of extemporaneous poetry, and his fine voice was braced by an indignant energy, as he chanted the dirge, both of his harp and of himself.

“ Consecrate Harp ! whose music has ever,
On Solyma’s walls—in her God-hallowed fane,
Sounded the praise of Jehovah ! Oh ! never
Shall finger of Heathen thy holiness stain ;
For thus, thus do I snap every chord,
Devoting its last dying breath to the Lord !

Shudder not, Harp ! no lascivious Pagan
Shall waken thy tones to his profligate Muse,
Nor strike in his impious Anthems to Dagon
Strings that have thrill’d to the hymns of the Jews ;
For thus, thus do I snap every chord,
Devoting its last dying breath to the Lord !

And ye, too, O strings of my heart ! break asunder,
It never shall throb in the breast of a slave.
Smite me, O merciful Heaven ! with thunder,—
Since Solyma falls, let me sink to my grave,
Blind to the triumph of Pagans abhorr’d,
And yielding my last dying breath to the Lord !”

As the minstrel concluded his last lay, he fell upon his harp ; and Zillah, finding in his words a corroboration of Nabal's assertions, as to the capture of Jerusalem, and the triumph of the Pagans, pressed forward, aghast and heart-stricken as she was, towards the ascent where the Hebrews had first encountered the Roman cohort, and whence she might obtain a full view of the city.

A cry of horror burst from her lips as she reached it. The whole Valley of Jehosophat was filled with a mighty host of armed men, and turret-bearing elephants, and camels, and horses, and lofty moving castles, and battering-rams, and ponderous engines of every description, all combining in one tremendous assault upon the walls and ramparts. From some of the moving towers, bridges had been thrown upon the bulwarks, along which continued streams of soldiers were rushing into the town, winning street after street, and spreading havoc and

destruction on all sides ; while the air thrilled with the fierce shouts and outcries of the combatants, the neighing of horses, the shriek of elephants, the clangour of brazen-throated trumpets, the clash of arms and cymbals, the screaming of the barbaric music belonging to Herod's auxiliaries, the concussion of the battering-rams, the groaning of the enormous engines, the crash of the great stones they shot forth, and all the stunning clamour and tumult of an assaulted city. The heavens themselves mingled in the hideous shock : dark clouds rushed against one another, the forked lightning leaped forth, a roar of thunder followed, and the piercing shriek of numerous human voices, predominating for the moment over every other sound, having drawn Zillah's attention to one of the city towers built upon the wall over the steep precipice of Mount Moriah, she saw it rock, and heave, and bend, and finally, with all the people crowded upon its terrace and galleries, plunge over the dizzy

height into the Valley of Jehosophat, shaking the solid earth as it fell, sending up a terrific sound that rivalled the thunder itself, and burying hundreds of the besiegers and besieged in one common ruin. It seemed as if heaven and earth, man and beast, were leagued together for the destruction of the Holy City; but however appalling might be the catastrophe, it checked not for a single moment the demoniac fury of the combatants; the assailants being now elated with the certainty of success, and exasperated at the obstinacy of the continued defence, while the Jews still fought on with the fierce madness of desperation.

Astounded and awe-stricken, Zillah turned her eyes from the Valley, where mangled men, elephants, and camels, were heaving and writhing amid the ruins of the precipitated tower; but as she bent them towards the Temple, new horrors awaited her. The centre of the sacred pile was shrouded in a volume of dark smoke,

proceeding from the galleries which were on fire, the flames revealing a Roman eagle planted on the summit of the inner wall, a fatal proof that the whole structure was in the power of the assailants. Thousands had crowded into the galleries, as into a sanctuary and place of sure protection ; some of these were still hurling down stones and lances upon the enemy ; some, as the flames approached them, encountered a not less certain death by throwing themselves over into the courts beneath ; others, with uplifted arms, were appealing to Heaven for deliverance.

“ My father ! my dear father ! I will perish with him ! ” shrieked Zillah, as the piteous spectacle before her reminded her of his danger. She was rushing forward with this intention, when her progress was arrested by a sight that transfixed her with horror. In a pool of blood, which had evidently flowed from his numerous wounds, she beheld the prostrate body of Felix !

Wan and deathlike as they were, there was a placid expression upon his features, which might almost have been termed a smile, for Zillah was nearly the last object that he had beheld ; but it was like the ghastly gleam thrown by the setting sun upon the face of the Dead Sea, before it surrenders it up to darkness and night. Zillah shut her eyes ; she endeavoured to stagger forward that she might seek her father ; but her head swam, her limbs refused to support her, she pressed both hands upon her heart, uttered a long shuddering groan, and sunk senseless upon the ground by the side of her lover.

CHAPTER IX.

THE tower precipitated into the Valley had not been struck down by lightning, as Zillah imagined. For some time previous, it had been completely undermined by the Romans, who, on the day of the assault, removed the sustaining props, intending that it should fall inwards upon the town, so as to increase the general confusion ; but it took an opposite direction, plunged over the precipice, and spread destruction among the assailants. It was the same building of which possession had been taken by Salome and the other conspirators : at the period of the attack they were arranging a plot for the assassination

of the King, and the delivery of the town to the Romans, and having ascended to the terrace and gallery to make signals of surrender, they were hurled into the abyss, and dashed to atoms.

Although he escaped the swords of these conspirators, Antigonus could not long delay his doom. "In the hurry and confusion of the assault," says the Jewish historian, "he was so mean and heartless, that, without any regard to his quality, or to his past or present fortune, he came down from the fortress of Baris, and cast himself at the feet of Sosius; who, without any sort of pity for his calamity, received him with this taunt, that his name should be no longer Antigonus, but Antigona. But though he behaved himself like a woman, he was not used like one, for he was laid in chains, and kept a prisoner." Sosius having settled the new king in his government, dedicated a golden crown to God, and left Jerusalem, carrying his

prisoner Antigonus to Mark Antony, by whom, at the pressing instances of Herod, he was put to death, terminating in his person the reign of the Asmonæan family.

Zillah, on recovering from her long state of insensibility, found herself stretched upon cushions within a tent, Lilla was sitting beside her fast asleep, and in front of her, through the opening of the canvas, she looked out upon a little green valley, along which a rivulet gushed, sparkling in the sunshine. Its opposite bank was crowned by a grove of dates, in the shade of which sheep and goats were browsing, while the sound of a shepherd's pipe floated at intervals upon the breeze, mingled with the song of birds, the gurgling of the waters, the rustling of leaves, and the bleating of the sheep. This scene of sylvan tranquillity offered such a contrast to the rage, tumult, and horror of which she had lately been an agonised witness, that for the moment her faculties were bewildered, and she

almost imagined that, after having passed through the pangs of death, she had entered upon some new and Elysian state of being. As consciousness and memory returned, her first thought was of the Sagan—"My father! where is my father?" she exclaimed—"I may still be in time to save him."

"She has recovered! she has recovered!" shouted Lilla, starting from her sleep. "Dearest Zillah! your fit has lasted so long that we almost thought you dead. I will run for the Sagan; he has only this instant quitted the tent." In a few minutes the delighted and amazed Zillah was in the arms of her father.

"Hush! hush!" exclaimed Lilla, putting her finger to her lips with an arch look; "no more cries of joy, I beseech you. You know not whom you may be disturbing. Come, follow me, and let us see whether you have done any mischief by your thoughtless exclamations."

"Go with her, my child," said the Sagan;

“ the wild girl, and her still wilder lover, have been the preservers of our lives, and in this happy moment we must refuse them nothing.”

She was about to quit the tent, in compliance with his wishes, when Esau, whom we may now call by his true name of Ephraim, hastily entered it. “ I heard the voice of Zillah,” he exclaimed, “ and I lose not a moment in imploring her pardon for the insult offered to her at our last interview. I was then mad—I knew not what I did ;—I was the raving lion robbed of his mate. The recovery of Lilla has restored me to my senses, as far, at least, as so wild a rover as myself is ever likely to possess them. Beautiful Zillah ! if you cannot pardon Esau the wild man of the mountains, or Jareb the Revenger, you will, I trust, be reconciled to me as Ephraim of Jerusalem, when you listen to the intercessor whom I have provided to plead my cause. You were going into the next tent ; I will accompany you.”

They passed into it accordingly, when the previous amazement and delight of Zillah were exalted to perfect bewilderment at her beholding Felix, extended upon a litter. A deadly paleness invested his features, but they were animated with a gleam of joy as he murmured in a faint voice, "I have obeyed your orders, dearest Zillah. I have done my duty to my country. I fell like a Roman soldier. All my wounds are in front, although none of them are dangerous. You bade me look forward to future happiness. I do, I do; but none can confer it upon me except yourself.

"Enough! enough!" cried Lilla, "I am the chief physician of our little camp; and I will not allow my patients to utter another word. To have seen one another is sufficient for to-day. Come, Zillah, you must return with me immediately to the other tent."

To explain this scene, it will be necessary to give a summary account of Ephraim. As has

been already intimated, he was the only child of Salome, by her first husband. Unrivalled in all military exercises ; courageous even to rashness ; fiery, wild, and adventurous ; he was never happy except when he was absent from Jerusalem upon some warlike enterprise, the more romantic and desperate, the better was it adapted to his daring genius. Success almost invariably crowned his efforts, and his generosity being equal to his valour, he was the darling of the soldiery. Tinctured with the superstition of the age, he was in the habit of consulting an Egyptian astrologer settled at Jerusalem, and having in these visits encountered his daughter Zaida, who in the stately character of her beauty somewhat resembled Zillah, he fell violently in love with her. Her father had wrought for her, with his own hands, a talismanic necklace, which he strictly charged her to keep perpetually about her person, assuring her that

if she parted from it, even for an instant, her life would be in jeopardy. In one of their hours of dalliance, Ephraim, in playful frolic, snatched it from her neck, and while she was imploring him to return it, an assassin stole upon the bower in which they were seated, and was aiming a blow at the lover, when Zaida, perceiving his intention, threw herself suddenly forward, and received the weapon in her heart. Instantly smiting the villain to the ground with his sword, Ephraim extorted from him before he died, a confession that he had been employed by Antigonus the king, who had been instigated to this atrocity, not only by the false allegations of some tale-bearer, but by jealousy of Ephraim's relationship to the Asmonæans, and of his great popularity with the army and people. Finding that his design had failed, the monarch determined to crush him, ordered him to be arrested as a murderer, for **having** killed the

assassin ; and when he fled from Jerusalem to avoid the royal vengeance, proclaimed him an outlaw, and set a heavy price upon his head.

Ephraim, verily believing that if he had not snatched the talisman from the neck of Zaida, her life might have been saved, accused himself as the author of her death, and unable to bear the sight of the ill-omened necklace, gave it to his mother, before he bade her adieu, and turned his back upon the Holy City. Palestine and the Jews having become odious to the astrologer, since the tragical death of his daughter, he returned to Alexandria, his native place, where some lucky prediction procured him an appointment in the establishment of Mark Antony, who carried him with him to Rome. It will be recollected that, during the fire in that city, Zillah had taken refuge in his astrological closet, upon which occasion he had recognized the talisman, the work of his own hands, and had rescued its wearer for the sake

of his daughter, the beautiful and murdered Zaida.

Soon after the flight of her son from Jerusalem, Salome married the Sagan ; a circumstance which remained for some time unknown to Ephraim, who had then never seen Zillah. His naturally wild and ungovernable temperament being inflamed to desperation by the catastrophe we have mentioned, and the unjust proscription of the king, he assumed the name of Jareb the Revenger, swore implacable enmity to Antigonus, and placing himself at the head of a troop of banditti, several of whom were Arabs, and who were quickly reinforced by deserters and refugees from Jerusalem, he made war upon the escorts, caravans, and detachments of Antigonus, hoping, in time, to collect an army sufficiently numerous to drive him from the throne. Making an excursion with some of his Arab followers into their own country, he was introduced to Lilla, to whom he soon

formed as vehement an attachment as he had previously done to Zaida ; but her father, not choosing to unite his daughter to an acknowledged outlaw, and a leader of banditti, conveyed her secretly to an island in the Red Sea. To deceive her lover, and induce him to abandon all thoughts of pursuing her, he contrived that a letter should fall into Ephraim's hands, stating that she had been dispatched to the care of Manasseh ben Araboth, a kinsman residing at Rome. So far from damping his ardour, this did but stimulate the impetuous Ephraim to follow her, although other designs, connected with the plots and intrigues of Salome, induced him to pay a previous visit to Jerusalem. Thither he accordingly went as Esau the wild man of the mountains, and assumed a fresh disguise, for the purpose of obtaining that interview with his mother, from which Zillah had seen him departing. Zillah's beauty, and her resemblance to his lost Zaida, had instantly struck

his inflammable fancy, and, in spite of his attachment to Lilla, he burnt with admiration of the “stately daughter of Jerusalem,” as he termed her. It must be recollected that love in those days, and especially with such a wild and ardent temperament as his, was not a sentiment which it required time to develope, but an instant and impetuous passion, born and nourished of the eye. Uncertain of recovering Lilla, his heart had already fixed upon Zillah for her successor, should it be disappointed of its present object; a resolution to which her marked resemblance to Zaida gave more the appearance of his returning to a first love, than the formation of a new one. This nascent attachment, and his own romantic temperament, had induced him to serenade her at Solomon’s Well, and to hover near the travellers, whose destination was the same as his own; though many circumstances deterred him from revealing either his person or his purposes, which latter were,

indeed, dependent on the recovery of his lost mistress.

On his arrival at Rome, he betook himself to the house of Manasseh ben Araboth, the same, it will be recollected, under whose guardianship the Sagan had intended to place his own daughter. Here Ephraim learnt from the porter, that a beautiful Hebrew damsel, with her friends, had been enquiring for Manasseh on the previous day, and he eagerly demanded their address, concluding that his beloved Lilla had arrived. To his incredible disappointment, he found that the female in question was Zillah. In Rome he had most cogent reasons for preserving a strict incognito, as the Government had declared him a rebel, for having instigated the Jews, before the usurpation of Antigonus, to throw off the Roman yoke, and discontinue the payment of the tribute; in addition to which motives for concealment, he constantly dreaded the fulfilment of some obscure pro-

phhecy, that he would ultimately become the victim of treachery. Valorous as he was, even to a reckless temerity, when opposed to an open foe, his superstitious faith in this prediction made him so suspicious of his fellow-countrymen, who might denounce him to the Government, that he kept himself cautiously aloof, even from the Sagan. Wishing, in his enquiries for Lilla, to render himself as little conspicuous as possible, he had employed for the purpose Zerah, the same Hellenised Hebrew servant who had been commissioned to intoxicate Simon, the Levite, before the abduction of Zillah. In the hope of obtaining money for the information, this man betrayed the instructions he had received from the agent of Mark Antony, and Ephraim instantly surmising that some atrocity was meditated against Zillah, although he could not develope its exact nature, had introduced himself, by night, into the garden of the house in which she resided, and sang a warning lay,

intended to put her on her guard against the infamous projects of the Triumvir.

Having ascertained that he had been imposed upon by the father of Lilla, Ephraim quitted Rome, exasperated almost to frenzy by the disappointment of his hopes, and his indignation at the deceit of which he had been the dupe. The vessel in which he embarked was driven under Mount *Ætna* in a furious tempest, upon which occasion, to avoid being dashed upon the rocks, he mounted his favourite horse, and swam ashore; but as the ship rode out the storm in safety, he re-embarked, arrived without farther accident in Palestine, resumed the command of his troop of banditti, and signalized his return by plundering the caravan, of which the Sagan and his companions had seen the forlorn remains making their way towards Alexandria. When Zillah became his prisoner, after the defeat of the Ethiopian detachment in the defile of the mountains, she might have

been the victim of his maddened passions, had not the sight of the talismanic necklace, which had belonged to his beautiful and murdered Zaida, appealing at once to his remorse, his superstition, and his affections, suddenly appeased his boiling blood, and induced him to speed her onwards upon her journey.

His hatred of Antigonus, and the revenge to which he had dedicated himself, when he assumed the name of Jareb, impelled him to offer his services to Herod, who gladly accepted him for an ally, and he came up accordingly to the siege of Jerusalem, having previously discovered Lilla's place of concealment, and visited her in the disguise of a bottle-mender. In one of the sorties of the Jews he was saved, when in imminent peril of his life, by Felix ; and, in the friendship and mutual confidence thus engendered, the discovery was made that each possessed a mistress in the house of the Sagan. Felix, to whom the military profession became

every day more and more repugnant, sighed for nothing but tranquillity and Zillah. Ephraim was too much attached to his roving life to desire any other, especially if Lilla could be made his companion ; and he knew, moreover, that having once been put in nomination by Salome, as King of the Jews, his life would not be safe, for a single day, from the jealousy of Herod, when he should mount the throne, however cordial might be his apparent good-will at the present moment. It was agreed, therefore, between the lovers, that after the capture of the city, of which no doubt was entertained, they should instantly carry off their mistresses, and fly from Jerusalem, taking with them the Sagan, who, it was ascertained, had been marked down in Herod's list of vengeance and proscription. For this purpose a detachment of Ephraim's troop, with horses, litters, and tents, was kept in constant readiness.

On the day of the assault, Ephraim, having

fulfilled his vow, by witnessing the downfall of Antigonus, hastened to the Sagan's house, the appointed place of rendezvous for himself and Felix. Here he found that Zillah was missing; he learned the direction she had taken when accompanying the troops, and hurried with the Sagan and Lilla to the field of battle, where they were seen and hailed by Felix, who had swooned from the loss of blood, but had just recovered his senses as they approached. In another half hour, the whole party, reclining in litters, or mounted on horses, and escorted by a select detachment of Ephraim's troop, bearing their light tents with them, were crossing the country to the south, leaving the ill-fated city of Jerusalem a prey to hideous uproar, massacre, and horror. In a sequestered pastoral valley, beyond the town of Jerimoth, they halted, and set up their tents; and here it was that the bewildered Zillah, when her consciousness returned, had at first imagined herself to

be translated from the stormy world into some new and Elysian state of existence.

Most of the Arabian women possessed some knowledge of surgery, an art which the hazardous and pugnacious habits of the men rendered peculiarly necessary. In this science, Lilla, instructed by her mother, held herself to be no mean proficient ; an opinion which was ultimately justified by her success in the cure of Felix. After receiving several wounds, he had been overthrown and trampled down in the furious onset of the Jews : his swoon, by stopping the farther effusion of blood, had probably saved his life ; and having now Lilla for his surgeon, and Zillah for his nurse, his restoration to perfect health was rapidly effected.

At the suggestion of the former, they continued their journey, by such easy stages, as retarded not the recovery of the invalid, until they reached an exquisitely beautiful and picturesque spot, forming a perfect garden of Eden,

on the borders of the Red Sea, at the northern extremity of Arabia Felix. "I was once brought to this little Paradise by my mother," said Lilla, "and if any sylvan beauty, if any loveliness of earth could induce me to chain myself to one spot, this should be the place. Were I content to be as a flower, drawing my sustenance from the ground, and breathing odours to heaven, but fettered to one little modicum of earth, in this enchanting garden would I live and fade away. Or, could I be satisfied, like one of those little rivulets, to run my fixed course, prattling, and sparkling, and playing with the bright pebbles, the nodding flowers, and the glancing shadows; listening to the song of birds, the shepherd's pipe, and the chime of my own liquid music, until dying in the same bed wherein I was born, I should gradually exhale myself into the skies, amid these pleasant bowers would I wind my gentle way, and close my peaceable career. To me and to my brave

Ephraim, the wilderness, the desert, the camp, the bounding barb, the wide earth, and above all, the feeling that we are free as the air we breathe, are the sole and transcendent delights of life; but to those who admire the loveliness, better than the stern sublimity of nature, and feel not the imprisonment of a permanent residence, what scene can be so eligible, so exquisite, as this ?”

It was, indeed, a landscape of surpassing beauty. Enamelled with flowers, refreshed by numerous rivulets, cooled by the sea-breezes, perfumed with the ambrosial fragrance of balm, cinnamon, and myrrh, it well deserved the name of the Little Paradise bestowed upon it by Lilla. Not less healthful than aromatic, the very air delighted the senses and exhilarated the soul; the fruits were more abundant and exquisite than in any other region; and the palm-trees peculiar to this happy spot, bore yellow, red, and purple dates, equally grateful to the sight,

and delicious to the palate. At a few miles distance was a seaport town, the emporium of the rich spices and drugs, shipped by the Arabian merchants, one of whom had built a stately pleasure-house, in the most picturesque part of the district which we have been describing. Felix purchased it, and in this mansion was soon afterwards solemnized the double marriage of Zillah and Felix, Lilla and Ephraim, the Sagan himself performing the ceremony. The two latter soon took their departure to resume that roving and unfettered life, for which long habit and individual temperament had so expressly fitted them, promising, however, to return, at least once a year, to visit their friends. When Cleopatra, at a subsequent period, formed the romantic project of transporting her navy across the Isthmus of Suez, sailing down the Red Sea, and founding some new empire in the East, beyond the reach of the Roman arms, Ephraim, pitying the forlorn flight of so beauti-

ful and accomplished a queen, and struck with the grandeur of her project, assisted, with his troop, in escorting the first convoy of ships—which actually reached the Red Sea by the novel mode of land-carriage—and was returning to accompany a second division of the fleet, when the first was burnt by a hostile band of Arabs, the whole scheme was rendered abortive, and both Cleopatra and Antony perished in a manner too universally known to need any fresh record. Although Ephraim was constantly engaged in daring enterprises, his genius and good fortune enabled him to escape the evil consequences which such a lawless life might have been expected ultimately to entail. When hard pressed, he took refuge in the desert or the wilderness; but neither success nor danger ever prevented himself and Lilla from performing their promise, and visiting their friends once in the course of every year.

By the first accounts from Jerusalem, the

Sagan received the welcome tidings that his kinsman Gabriel had obtained a pardon from the new king. After the capture of the city, he had fled into the country and concealed himself; but when Herod had glutted his revenge, by sacrificing all the more obnoxious partisans of Antigonus, he was easily induced to forgive Gabriel, in consideration of his having saved and brought back the crown jewels; he even commissioned him to make fresh purchases for the formation of a new royal crown, more costly and resplendent than Jewish monarch had ever yet worn, and it became, in consequence, so much the fashion among the nobles of the magnificent and luxurious court, established by Herod, to employ the King's jeweller, that he was quickly enabled to repair his fortunes by an occupation which he would have been delighted to follow, even as an amateur.

At first, it was a grievous drawback from the otherwise unclouded happiness of the Sagan

and his daughter that they could not go up to the yearly festivals at Jerusalem; but every fresh account conveyed to them from that city diminished their regret, until it subsided altogether. Regardless of the laws and ordinances of Moses, Herod appointed a High Priest totally disqualified for the office, and gave him a guard of turbulent soldiers for his defence. He built a theatre and amphitheatre, set up statues, established Quinquennial games in honour of Augustus, to whom he also dedicated a temple, and sacrilegiously violated the sepulchres of the kings in search of buried treasure, penetrating so far that he came to the very coffins wherein the bodies of Solomon and David were deposited, and brought away vast quantities of plate, and vessels both of gold and silver. According to the statements transmitted to the Sagan, this impious deed, which was perpetrated at night-time, under the immediate inspection of the King, did not pass unpunished, for a

flash of fire bursting from the interior recesses of the vaults, killed two of his guards; whereupon, conceiving it to have been a judgment for the profane temerity of his proceeding, he erected a sumptuous monument of marble, in expiation of his offence, so as to block up for the future all possible access to the sepulchre.—“Raca!” ejaculated the Sagan when he learnt these tidings—“all his deeds are heathenish and execrable: Solyma is no longer the Sanctuary of God; she is no more Jerusalem—Hakdoshoh, the Holy City; she is unsanctified and desecrated by Pagan abominations. Shall not the Lord visit for these things? Behold! he hath already sent an earthquake and a pestilence to warn Judæa; and if her offences be continued, he will ultimately sweep from the face of the earth the rebellious city which he once hallowed and glorified by his visible presence.”

With the produce of his large estates in Italy, which he sold for that purpose, Felix built

a stately synagogue, and laid out gardens, and pleasure-grounds, and surrounded himself with flocks and herds, in the midst of which, both his own life and Zillah's being protracted to an extended date by the salubrity of the climate, they lived as in the patriarchal times, and enjoyed an uninterrupted felicity, of which the world, perhaps, had never afforded so perfect an example since the golden age. Their little colony, on which the Sagan bestowed the name of Beth-gamel, or the House of Recompence, soon became enlarged by various refugees both from Jerusalem and Rome, the wars of faction and party in both those cities having driven many into exile. The charms of enlightened society were thus added to the other recommendations of the place, and so successful and benignant was the influence of Felix in removing mutual prejudices, that for the first time Jews and Pagans were seen living together in perfect harmony and fellowship. Many of the latter, who, if

irritated by insult or persecution, would have willingly become martyrs for Polytheism, won by the love, or convinced by the mild persuasions of Felix, voluntarily abjured their errors, and embraced the faith and the law of the Hebrews. Felix himself, zealous as he was in the cause of the true religion, had none of the fierce intolerance by which the Jews had too often been distinguished. He would not even declare to which of their various sects he belonged, lest he should be infected with their mutual hatred. —“ Though I no longer worship an image made by hands,” would he sometimes exclaim, “ let me not set up in my mind a spiritual idol of my own formation, and imagine that I am adoring the Deity, when I am only falling prostrate before my own opinion, enshrined in pride, conceit, and obstinacy. Let me not be deluded into the notion that I am showing my love to God by hating the men who differ from me ; for who can truly give his affections to the Creator,

and withhold them from the beings whom he has created? In faith and doctrine no one can be quite sure that he is right, but in the practice of religion none can err. In humble imitation of our heavenly Father, who sends the rain and the sunshine to all his children alike, and will, probably win them all ultimately from their errors, by continuing to scatter blessings upon their heads, let us consider the whole family of mankind as our brethren, not visiting them with bigotry and hatred, however widely they may differ from ourselves, but proving the superiority of our own tenets, by the practice of an all-embracing philanthropy, and the maintenance of an universal toleration."

THE END.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

